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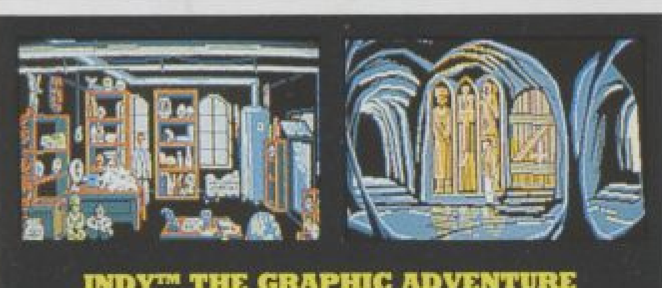
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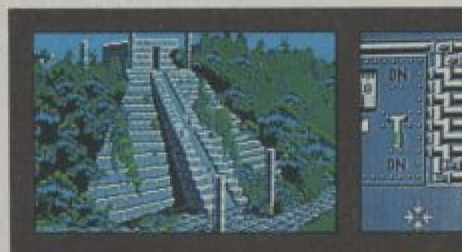
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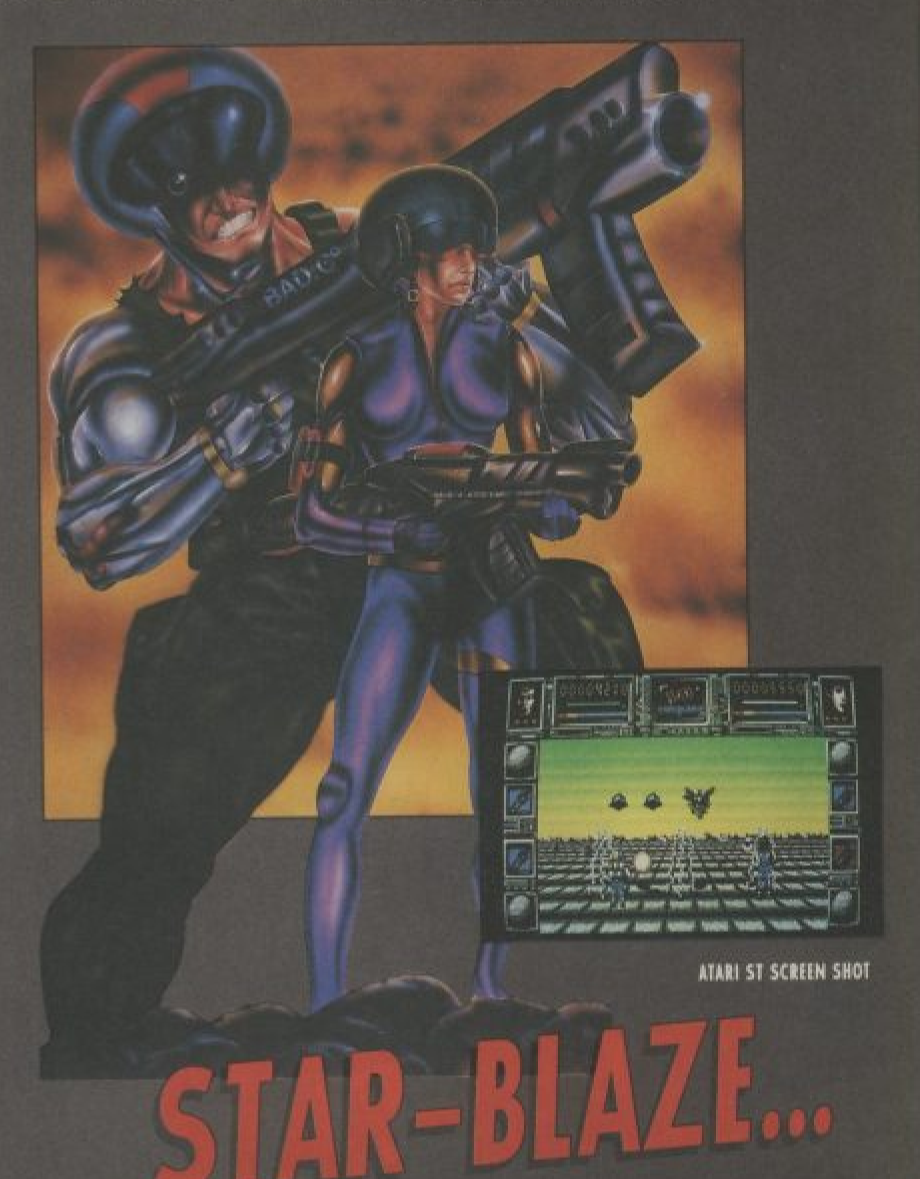
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BAD COMPANY...



ATARI ST SCREEN SHOT

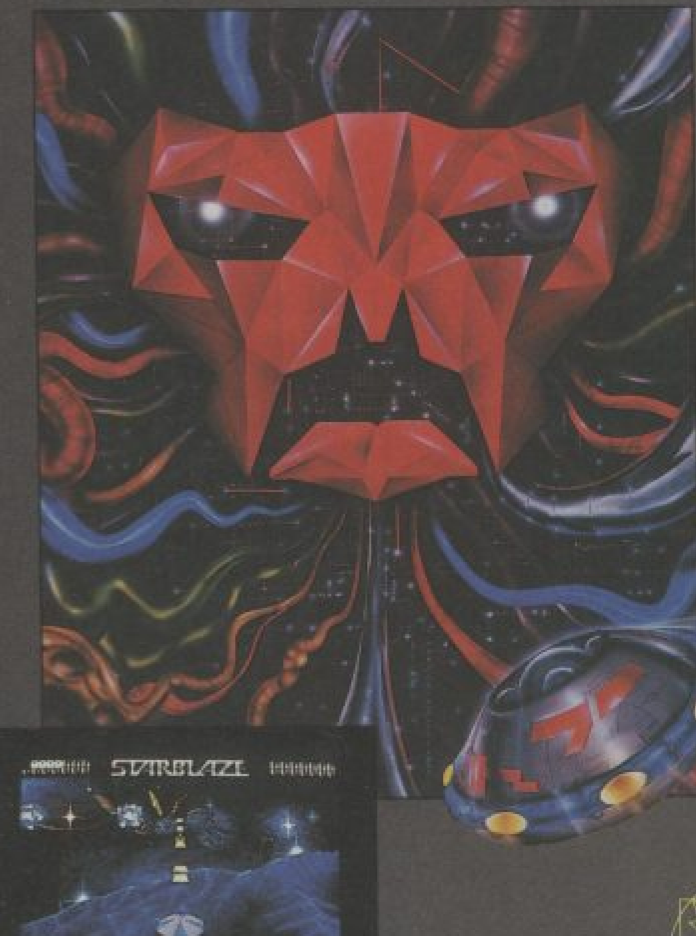
You've fallen into Bad Company. In this place there are no good guys, just you, your sidekick and wave upon wave of insectoid enemies who have just one thing in mind - the total destruction of every human they set their nasty little bug eyes on. No quarter is asked and none is given, you know what to do - if it's alien, blast it!

Bad Company is programming legend Steve Bak's latest and greatest masterwork with scrolling of vanishing point perspective surfaces, the latest superfast 3D sprite techniques and featuring:

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The Games machine

contents

The Christmas force is strong in TGM...

Check out page 35 for loads of goodies you can buy your computer for Christmas





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NEWS 'N' PREVIEWS

STUFF THAT HAPPENED — STUFF THAT WILL

Atari make music

The top music computer at the moment has joined forces with the top female singer of the moment. Well, not quite correct on both accounts, but Atari have signed a deal with Julia Fordham — whose recent album, Porcelain, smashed straight into the Top 20. The agreement involves Atari sponsoring her present tour, which finishes on November 17. So where's the link between Atari and Ms Fordham — get a load of this. 'Julia's audience consists of the more perceptive adult: album and CD buying, technically minded and intelligent — just the sort of people likely to be impressed by the Atari computer range.' If you happen to pop along to one of Julia's gatherings then look out for the perceptive adults among the audience — they're the ST owners.



Was we Konned?

After many months of speculation and rumours, it seems that there are real troubles at the offices of Konix — probably resulting in a post-Christmas release for their still-unfinished Multi System console. Rumours abound how Wynford P Holloway has been banned from signing anymore cheques, while the rest of the Board try to get the company back into shape. One employee commented to TGM:'Just two days ago I thought they were going to call in the Receiver.' Others were complaining that they hadn't been paid since Konix took on their services, checks had bounced, but assurances, TGM were told, are now rock solid and Konix are getting back on their feet again.

It was known that Konix had experienced some delays but no-one expected it to be this bad. It also appears that Konix turned down many offers for the console, coming from such luminaries as Ocean and George Lucas — although Konix will not confirm any of this. Konix still insist that the November release is plausible, however, we doubt you'll be able to find it in the shops now.

Software is another problem for Konix. In mid-October, Konix revealed that all software projects had been halted, explaining that all the developers had reached a stage where they could not continue without further development of the hardware. Konix Software chief, Jon Dean, commented recently that the freeze was temporary, with projects being delayed for six weeks.

With all these problems, it is unlikely Konix can continue without a major cash injection. Apparently Konix are talking to a major hardware distributor about backing. Regardless, everyone involved in the project is confident the machine will see the light of day — eventually.



Lost Computer People

In Issue 22 we stated that the 'author' of Little Computer People was the prolific David Crane. However, there seems to be some confusion.

The Pet Person, which was LCP's original name, was designed by Rich Gold and based on over 15 years of his computer art and artificial intelligence work. Basically, Mr Gold creates or designs life. The concept of the LCP was conceived and designed by Rich Gold through many years of research. Rich then took the idea to Activision in America. They gave the design to David Crane, who altered some of Gold's work to Activision's specification. LCP are entirely Rich Gold's idea and concept. We're sorry for any confusion caused, Rich.

What we really want to know is, when can we expect a follow-up? And where have all those LCP gone?

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

AT THE NEWSFIELD OFFICES OF TGM, ZZAP and CRASH.

1. **KICK OFF** (Anco) all formats
2. **STUNT CAR RACER** (MicroStyle) all formats
3. **NORTH AND SOUTH** (Infogrames) Amiga/ST
4. **POWER DRIFT** (Activision) all formats
5. **BATMAN** (Ocean) all formats
6. **OPERATION THUNDERBOLT** (Ocean) all formats
7. **XENON II** (Mirrorsoft) Amiga/ST
8. **INTERPHASE** (Mirrorsoft) Amiga/ST/PC
9. **INTERDICTOR** (Clares) Archimedes
10. **CHASE HQ** (Ocean) all formats



We're really sorry

Oh dear. We've made a bit of a mistake, to be honest. Remember the less-than-amazing rating given to Light Source's horizontal blaster, Sci-Fi? Well the version we received (we now find out) was a pre-production copy, which, although playable and with seemingly fully-integrated graphics and sound, was some two months away from completion. Our sincere apologies go to all concerned at Light Source and we're sure the finished version of Sci-Fi, due for release soon, will be a great improvement over the copy we received.

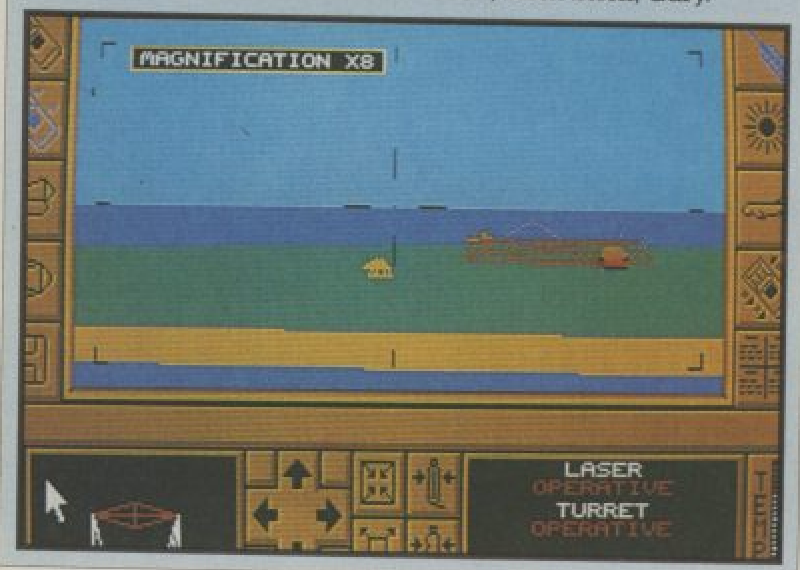
PRESS ANY KEY

Ocean get Carrier Command sequel

What's this? Just off the fax machine, news of Ocean's latest aquisition. After many months of speculation it seems that the follow-up to Carrier Command has slipped through MicroProse's grasp and into the inviting arms of Manchester giant Ocean. Realtime have been developing Battle Command for 18 months, primarily on the 16-bits, and expect to release the much-rumoured sequel in March 1990. 8-bit versions are to follow shortly after.

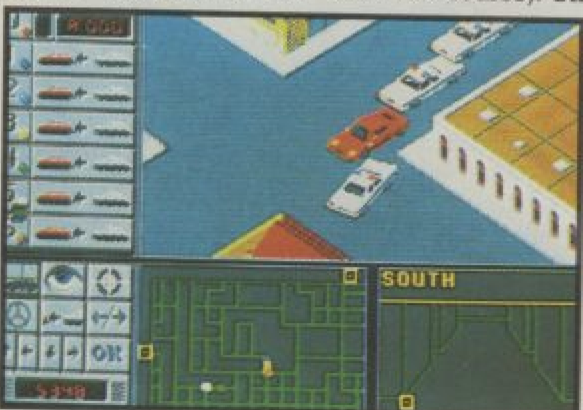
Battle Command continues the solid vector graphics, pioneered in Carrier Command, and features a futuristic tank equipped with a massive weaponry to use on the many missions before you.

63-year-old Gary Bracey of Ocean commented: 'This is Realtime's best game yet — they obviously realise this and wanted to place it with a publisher who could do it justice.' Oooh, bitch bitch, Gary.



Chicago 90

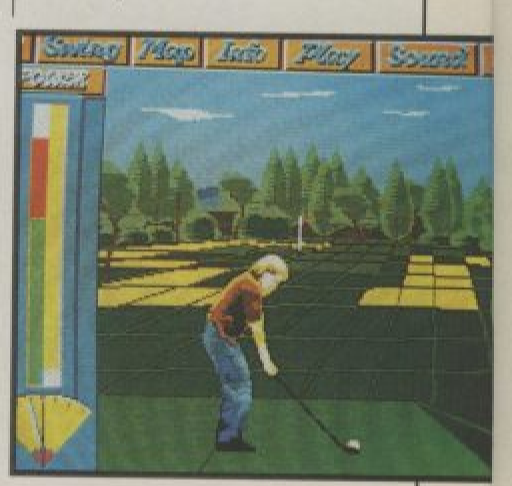
Good or bad? Cop or gangster? Play both in Infogrames' latest arcade action extravaganza. Set in Chicago of the next decade, Chicago 90 is described by the French company as a 'pursuit' game. If choosing the side of law and order, you must control a team of six police cars to catch a team of dangerous thieves before they flee the city. As your team of cars strategical patrol the city they will encounter a variety of activities, including shootings and accidents, not to mention their own police barricades (thoughtfully set up by yourself, of course). Once a thief is located you must take control of the nearest vehicle and pursue him. Although, be careful how you handle this car, it's prone to skidding and will produce death-defying (most of the time) stunts at the slightest opportunity.



If you fancy the side of the gangster then get ready, for the cops will soon be on you, setting up roadblocks all over town. A game that's bound to appeal to all who liked, and can remember, Durrell's Turbo Esprit, Chicago 90 is out in December on Atari ST, Amiga and PC. (Amiga screen.)

Ultimate Golf — Shark Attack

With Ultimate Golf, Gremlin believe they have created the most realistic golfing simulation of our time — and taking a look at the specification, who are we to disagree. The game features every factor affecting a game of golf you could imagine. This includes 12-month weather patterns, 3-D terrain, course-walking, a computerised caddy and swing patterns, to be used in Foursomes, Greensomes, Fourball teamplay and normal one-against-one matches. Endorsed by golfing veteran Greg Norman, hence the subtitle Shark Attack, this sporting spectacular has taken eight man-years to create (whether that involved one man taking eight years or 69 men programming for six weeks is unclear), and that alone merits attention from ST, Amiga, PC and C64 owners this Christmas. (ST screen.)

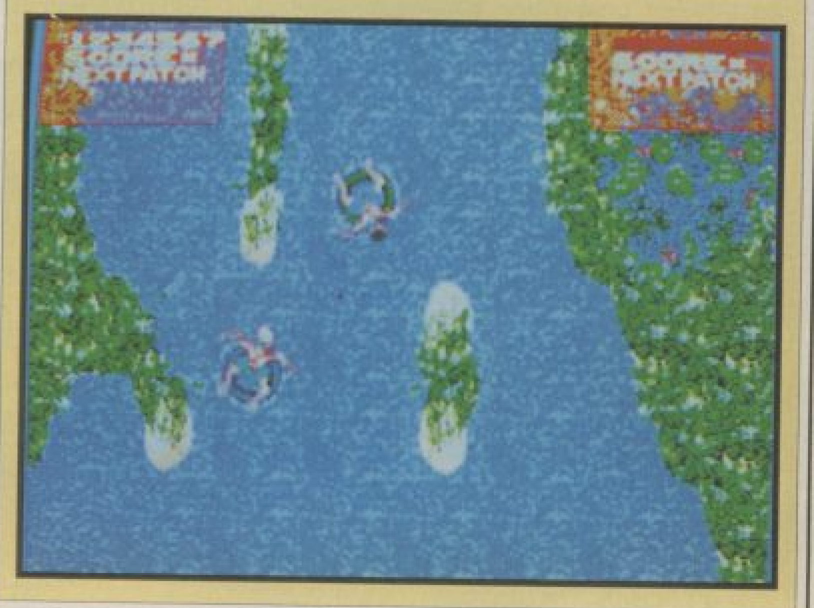


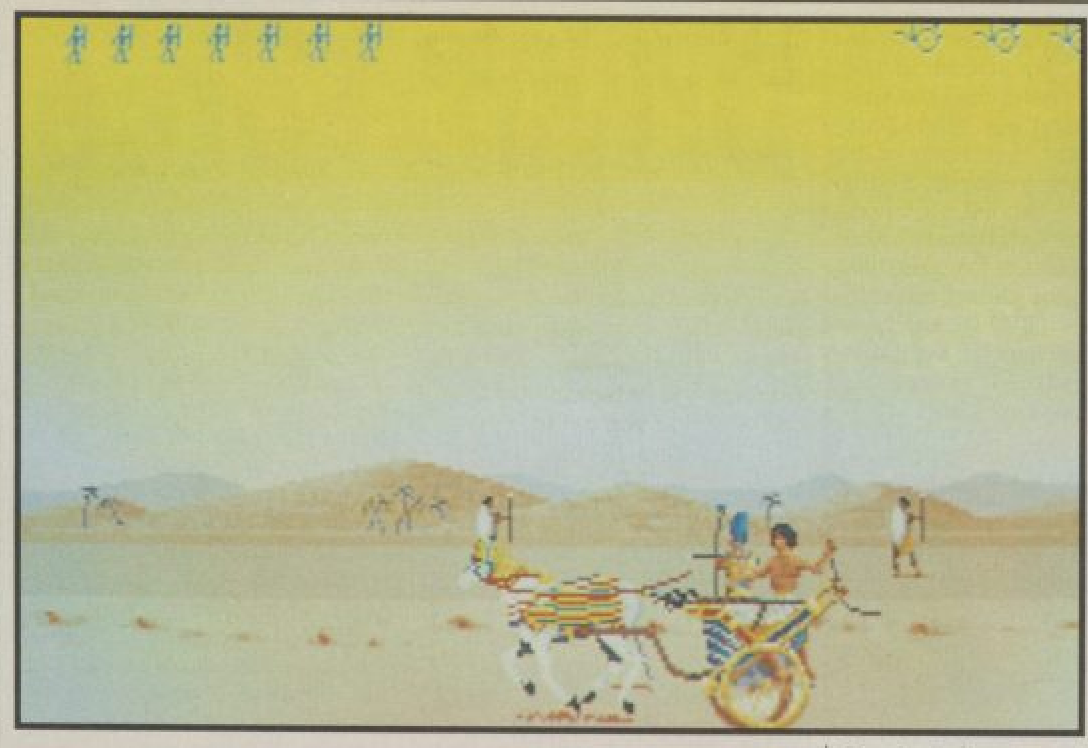
Toobin'

Whatever has happened to the letter 'g'. Is this part of Thatcher's new streamlining policy for Britain? Has our beloved 'g' been privatised? If something is not done fast it's certainly going into liquidation. Puzzled? Well just take a look at some recent releases; Hard Drivin', Drivin' Force and now Toobin'. All of them lacking the important 'g', to be replaced by the most unlikeable apostrophe. Who's to blame this time? Well, yet again, Tengen — or should we say Ten'en — producers of Hard Drivin'.

Their latest offerin' will bring a shiver to anyone who's experienced the exhilaration of 'tubing' down a river on an old car inner tube. After all, who wants to jump into a freezin' cold river at this time of the year? Not us. Still, for those of you who fancy the idea of ridin' the rapids on a patched-up blowout this is undoubtedly the biz. Featuring some terrific scrollin', Toobin' looks set to carry its arcade success onto computer this month.

One- or two-player action, and featuring a whole host of river ravers, as Biff and Jet search out the wildest party they can find (and are these boys wild). Trouble is, you're at the top of the river (be it the Amazon, Yukon, Rio Grande or Colorado) and party's at t'other. So what to do, but get out your inner tube and bob down the river. Great fun and extremely addictive, Toobin' is available on most popular formats. (ST screen.)







Pharaoh

Total Eclipse was the last game to touch on the beautiful and atmospheric setting of Egypt. And although it was based in this century, it has a lot in common (mostly sun and sand) with Rainbow Arts' latest trip into the action adventure world. Pharaoh takes you back 3000 years, to a land where temples and pyramids are already beginning to show the legacy of the all-powerful pharaohs.

The Gods of Egypt are becoming unhappy and dissatisfied with their lot in life. On the day of the Pharaoh's death, Seth (hardly an all-powerful name), God of the Desert and of Evil (boy, was he unlucky when they were handing out domains), arranges for all heirs to the Pharaoh's crown to be killed. Luckily for you, Amon-Re, the Sun God, picked you, the young prince, from drowning in the waters of the Nile. (Sounds familiar. Were there any bullrushes involved?)

Brought up by your fellow countrymen, you must ascend the social ladder and prove to your land that you are fit and worthy to be crowned the new Pharaoh. Meanwhile, Seth is trying to have you knocked off...

Ancient Egyptian action-adventurers need wait no longer, for Pharaoh is out now on Amiga, Atari ST and PC. (Amiga screen.)

MercenaryII: Damocles

'What?' you cry. 'How come you're *previewing* Damocles, when *The One* reviewed it in September?' Yeah, we wondered that ourselves when a preview/demo disk arrived in mid-October. So we rang up Novagen (in mid-October), who proceeded to tell us that the game was still unfinished and would be available for review purposes in November. So how come The One reviewed it? Director Bruce Jordan then explained that they had come up to Birmingham to see it. Ah, we thought, they've not yet mastered the disks so Novagen aren't sending out any copies! Would it be okay if we went over to the Novagen offices and reviewed it there? Oh no, we were told, the game isn't together yet, it's all in bits, totally unreviewable. Mmmm... It seems that in all the rush for the PC Show, The One must have drop a 'p' off the front of 'review', and then somebody must have accidentally put a ratings box on the same page. Let's hope Mercenary doesn't 'change' when we see it, and mysteriously GAIN some bugs like Federation of Free Traders did!

Not ones to put people off buying a product before it comes out, the early unplayable demo disk we saw didn't look that special, although I'm sure when it's finished in early November it'll be as good as The One's review copy. Mercenary II: Damocles will be available at the end of November on ST and Amiga. We'll have a review next issue — if it's finished in time (the game, that is)!



Footballer of the Year II



PRESS ANY KEY

Believe it or not, according to Gremlin's figures, Footballer of the Year (FOTY) sold over 400,000 units when it was released in 1986. Such sales are bound to raise questions about a sequel — and here it is. FOTYII takes over where the original left off.

The sequel features all the playability of the first, with extra strategy sections for those of you who felt neglected since you sussed Football Manager II. As in the prequel, your aim is simple — to become the top striker in the league, thus deserving the title of Footballer of the Year. Packed with sections, the game includes a league, FOUR supercups, tactics, trivia, transfers, internationals and action sequences. Sounds like a real must for those missing the live TV matches. Memberships cards available for all formats— no-one is refused! (Amiga screen.)

Drivin' Force

Digital Magic Software (DMS) are a relatively new crew on the scene. According to ex-TGMer Robin 'Bouncy Bouncy' Hogg, their first release, Drivin' Force, is even better than Power Drift. Could it be because they dropped the 'g' from driving? We think this is a major contribution to road safety.

Not looking too dissimilar to the aforementioned Activision game, DMS's road racing game gives arcade fans a whole new perspective on race sims. You can choose from five vehicles: sports car, motorbike, truck, Formula One and buggy, with a bonus track using jetskis. Each vehicle is suited to a certain selection of the 30 available tracks (from snow to tarmac). And with the five races in each vehicle taking place at different times of the day, each gets increasingly tougher — till, eventually you could end up driving in the dark over dangerous snow. Yet another element to add to the equation is the choice of competition you wish to take part in. Will it be league or knockout?

There are many more features which add up to a very addictive arcade game, which, unlike some around at the moment (mentioning no Bat-names), won't be completed after the first few goes.

Check out DMS's Power Drift-basher on the Amiga this month and the ST in January. (Amiga screen.)



East vs West — Berlin 1948

It seems amazing that a German software company should write/produce a game based around wartorn Berlin in 1948. It's like Ocean producing a game about IRA/RUC activity in Belfast. But it's true, Rainbow Arts have done just that in their latest adventure.

The Soviets (or Sowjets, as it says in this German-written English press release) have stolen a bomb from a British airbase and, it is believed, are storing it somewhere in Berlin. Taking the part of an American spy (why he's a Yank is not too clear) you must prevent the bomb reaching the East before time runs out (and, presumably, they blow everyone up — so much for Glasnost). Using all your contacts in the military and local police force, along with undercover spies in the black market, you must search out the hidden bomb and return it to GB.

East vs West — Berlin 1948 is available on Amiga, ST and PC in November. (Amiga screen.)

Safari Guns



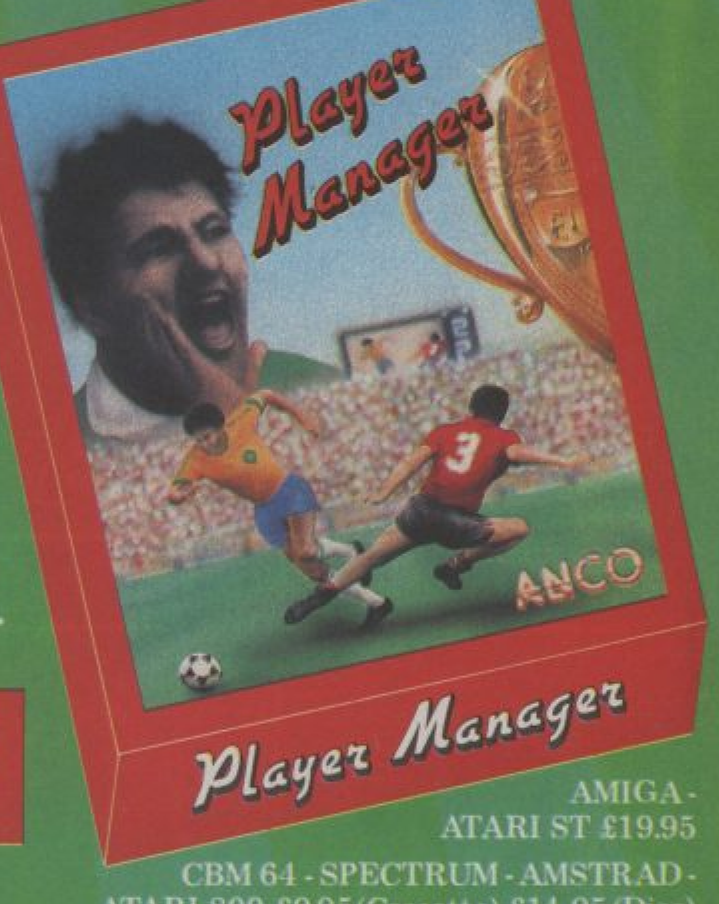
In this time of ecological awareness we have already had MicroProse's effort at global preservation, with Rainbow Warrior, and now it's time for the French (who always were very 'green') to get in on the act. Infogrames have come up with some interesting scenarios in their time but Safari Guns must take the biscuit. As an African gamekeeper, you must keep control of the vast animal reservation, whilst fending off poachers and ivory traffickers. Aim of the game is simple: save the fauna from the menace of extinction. Animals under your control include: lions, elephants, zebras, gorillas and crocodiles. Quite a handful! Atari ST, Amiga and PC owners can look forward to playing Safari Guns this Christmas.

Player Manager

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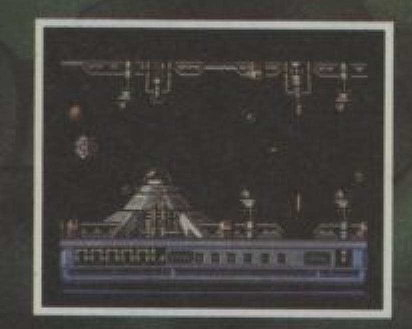
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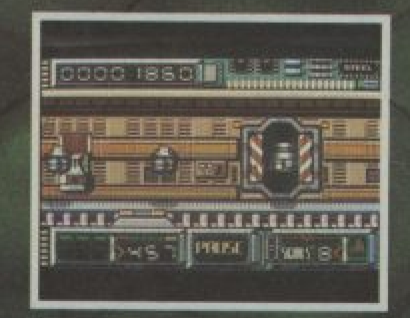


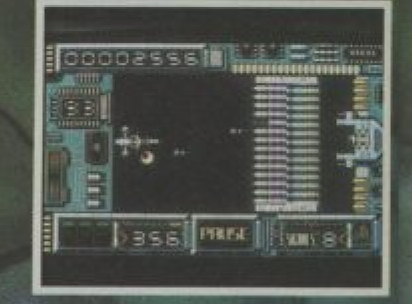
COMMODORE AMIGA AND ATARI ST

You are the Slayer, you deal in death. It's you or them so go out there and kick some butts — before they frazzle yours with their photon lasers.





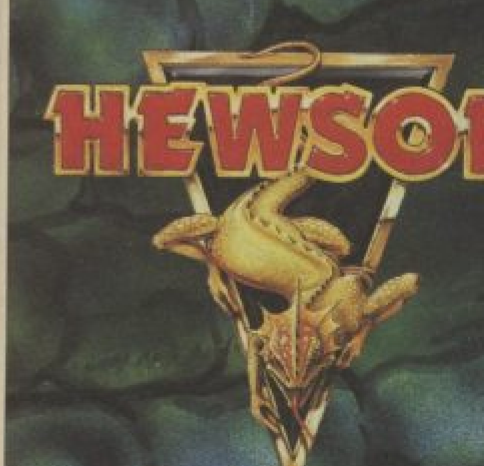






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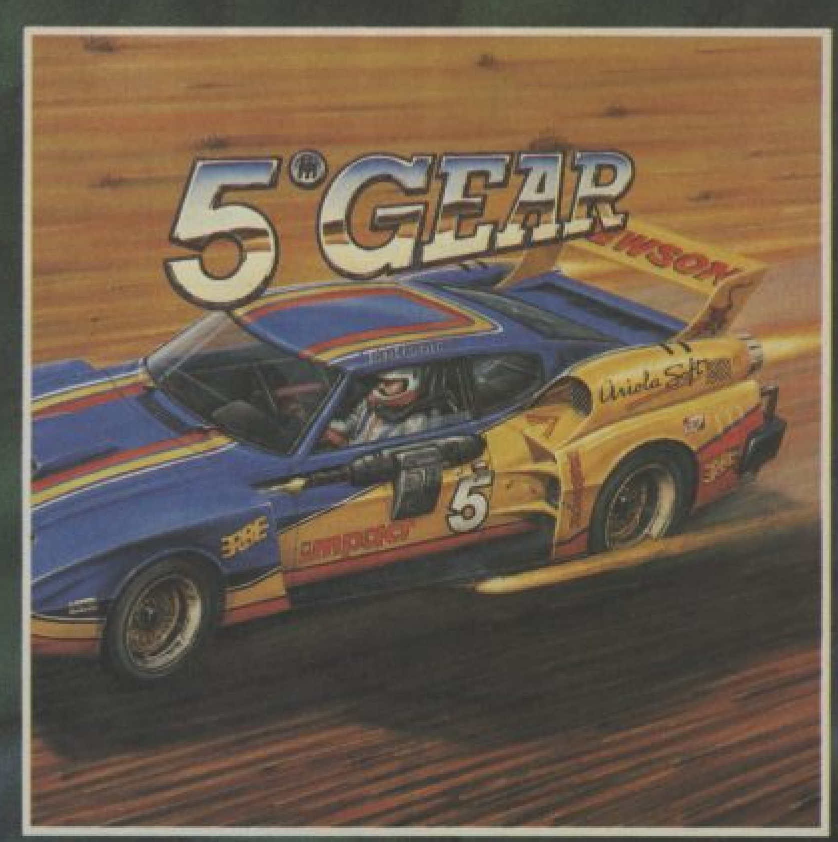
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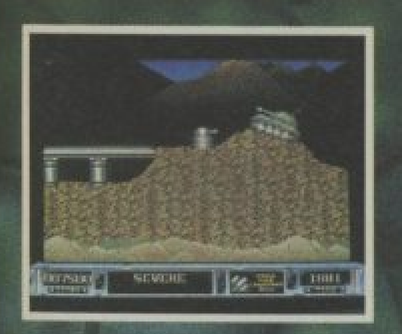
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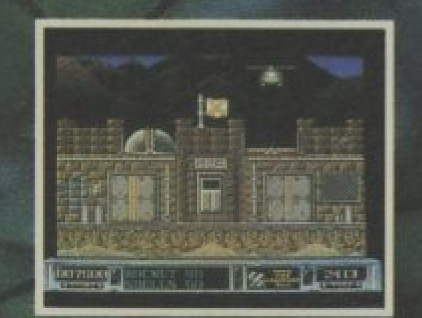
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OUR MAN IN JA

Shintaro Kanaoya digs deep and finds that the new PC Engine is more than just a sketchy drawing and a fast processor speed. We've the full story of the sequel to the most controversial console ever...

Who knows what madness lurks within the hearts of NEC hardware designers? If the Shadow knows, he can tell me 'cause their recent gaming invention is totally and utterly insane. 'A new NEC gaming machine,' I hear you ask. 'Not the fabled, the mystical, the so far unheard of 16-bit PC Engine?' I hear you wonder with suspense. YES! It's here and it's not gonna be next century, not next millenium, but December of this year (in Japan at least)! Great! Or is it? Was I telling the truth? Yes and no. Yes, there is a new machine from the makers of the PC Engine. Yes, it is coming out in December this year. Yes, it is the next step up from the PC Engine. But, no, it isn't 16-bit. And that doesn't mean that it's 32-bit either. The next step in computer gaming is the all-new, all-singing, all-dancing 8-bit PC Engine.

What's going on? Well, I'm not entirely sure. The makers of the Famicon, Nintendo, decided that when they upgraded it would be to a 16-bit machine. The same with Sega. Amigas and STs are 16-bit. So why upgrade the Engine and not change the CPU? There could be a zillion reasons. Too expensive for a console market, not enough chips, or, possibly, 16-bit's not really necessary. If you remember, when TGM broke the news about the Engine, there were many British people saying that the machine was 16-bit — however, we now know it's 8-bit. But it did raise a very interesting point. It showed that the Engine was so powerful it could convince us that upon the merit of its games, it just had to be 16-bit. But with Hudson Soft designing their own custom chip it proves that most things can be done just as well in 8-bit, with a few dedicated chips for graphics etc.

SUPER PC ENGINE — THE REAL FACTS

NEC only plan to build 50,000 initially (and they'll go in the first week in Japan!). The name, though, will only be tweaked. It's to be called something along the lines of the Super PC Engine or some play on the American name for it, the TurboGrafx-16 (the 16 stands for the 16-bit graphics chip, which is present on all Engines). Technically, though, quite a bit has changed. It has 32K of main RAM and 128K of video (graphics) RAM, as opposed to the old Engine's 8K and 64K respectively, allowing more complex screens to be scrolled at even faster speeds.

Do NEC really need to improve upon the processor, which seems fairly adequate on its own, and thus cause an unwanted rise in price? Obviously not. In fact they deserve a pat on the back for avoiding the obvious route, not sacrificing quality and saving money.

In that case, what has changed? The price, to around £170 (40,000 yen). So expect it in Britain for around £300. Although it seems unlikely that anyone in Britain will be selling them before Christmas

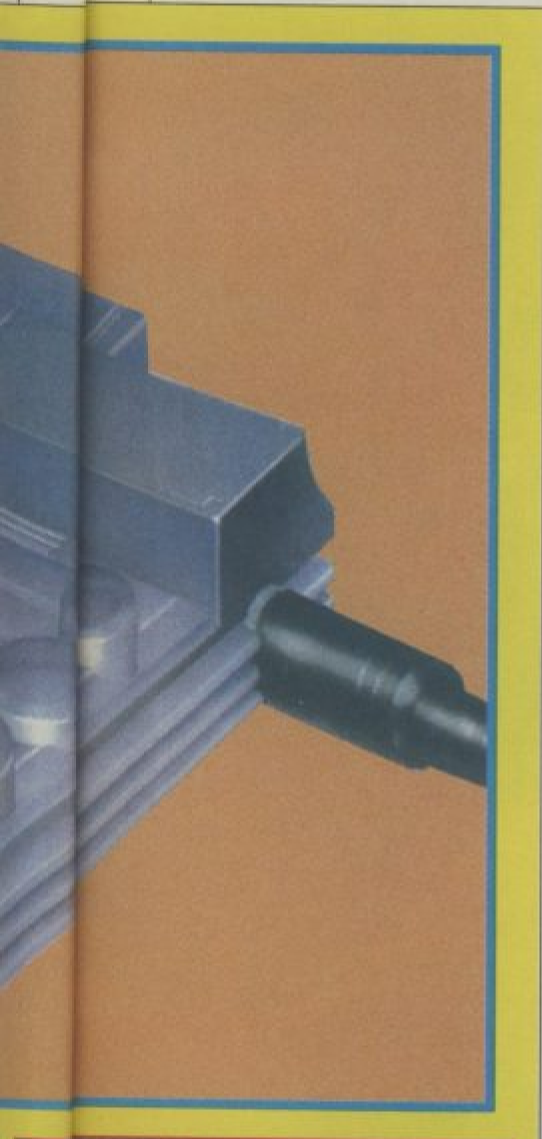
This new RAM is to cope with the improved graphical capabilities. The new Engine can handle 128 sprites on screen, double the old Engine, and it also has two background screens instead of one. This means the Super Engine is able to swap between many screens without flicker, which, amongst other things, can create astounding parallax scrolling. (However, the Nintendo 16-bit will have four — not that they're necessary with fast ROM-card access.)

All sound (stereo), including the CD-ROMs, will be pushed out of the video socket (without the use of the CD-ROM interface phonos). There's no TV version at present, although a PAL adaptor is to follow for Hong Kong where everyone's got PAL TVs.

The new Engine does have one little trick up its sleeve, though: a new external gadget connector. This will include, possibly, analogue steering wheels and pilot controls (like on the Konix) which basically make your car/plane move depending on how far you move the steering wheel/flight controls. If you move it a little to the left, it won't, like Gunship, suddenly bank left, killing you, your crew and millions of US government dollars, but move a little to the left, like a real car or plane.

Controllers of this type may also respond to influences within the game. Anyone who's played Hard Drivin' will probably know what I'm talking about. If the car's turning right at 180 kph the wheel will pull to the left. This, of course, adds greatly to realism and's much better than a funny flat controller. Also, through this connec-

JAPAN



tor, sound, data and graphics can be passed so you get even more wonderful sounds, data, graphics. Could this mean that two Engines could be connected together? We shouldn't speculate.

What of the CD-ROM? You'll be able to use your existing CD-ROM player with no real problems, although it'll look a bit strange stuck out of the side. No interface should be needed, however.

So, all in all, not a vast improvement over the original (more like the PC Engine+ than the PC Engine II) but then again, not a vast hike in price, about £70 over here. Existing software can be used on the new Engine, but obviously not vice-versa.

If you've already got a PC Engine then be satisfied. You're not missing out on much — yet. There's little software planned for it at the moment, so British owners should still keep buying the 'old' one in droves. Although, this time next year, things could be a bit different.

Regarding dimensions, the new one is around three times the size and weight of the original (weighing in at one kilo), so compact-minded people should think twice before discarding the old portable Engine for a brand-new chocolate box-sized console.

Plotter and tablet

Actually, it's been a pretty good month for Engine hardware. On top of the new Engine, the new graphics tablet and colour plotter is out. The four-colour plotter takes paper sizes of up to B5 (a bit smaller than A4). The graphics tablet is like an electronic pad. Using a special pen, images can be drawn on it and these can then be printed. It can also be used to trace pictures, as the tablet lifts up and the surface you write on is transparent. Clever, eh?

The graphics software supports the most frequently used Chinese/Japanese symbols and ones used for birthdays and New Year etc (plus some strange English letters, too!). The system (which costs around £200) comes complete with a software card, Artist Tool, containing a useful graphics program to add colour, letters, and numbers to those tracings, complete with options like magnify, fill, draw, etc.

Get my drift

And now for something completely different. Genpeitomaden. Surprisingly enough, it's a Japanese game, a conversion of the arcade machine. As a samurai you run along, complete with red flowing hair and pale skin, killing other nasty looking people. The main attraction is the size of the characters and the graphics. It looks fairly run-of-the-mill to me but you may think different. Check it out next March.

A squintillion times more interesting is Power Drift, which will now definitely include the bonus stages. If you come first in every race, you can race the course again in a buggy car, the bike from Hang-On or even the jet from Afterburner. Released date still unknown for this one. And if you still want more racing games, try F-1 Triple Battle, coming in December. A simultaneous three-player race game featuring all the usual famous courses. You'll probably like it if you liked Final Lap Twin, but race games with a control pad don't raise my blood pressure one iota. Now Winning Run on the other hand...

Atomic Robo Kid is coming out for both the Mega Drive and the Engine. Anyone who liked the arcade game is bound to find some thrills in the conversions. USA Pro Basketball is the Engine's first basketball game. Some of the teams to feature come from Dallas, New York, Miami and Los Angeles.

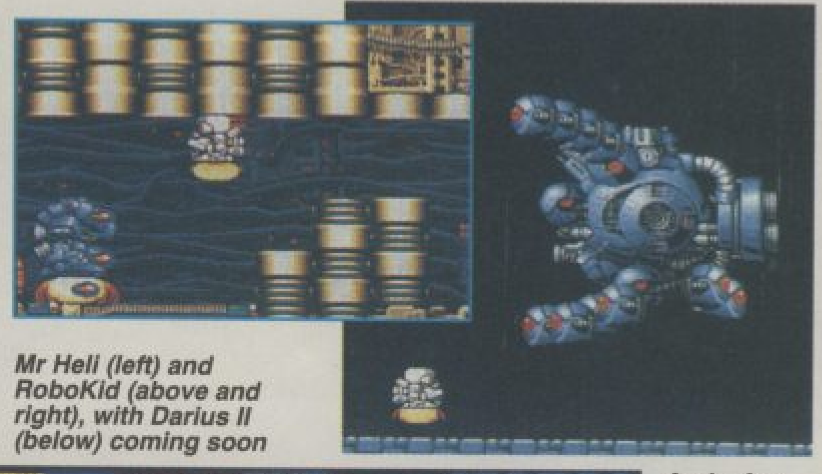
Mr Heli, which if I remember correctly has come out on the Amiga, ST and others in Britain, is to make a November appearance, under the name of Mr Heli's Exciting Adventure. Thrilling, I'm sure.

Whoever hasn't played Chase HQ should be shot. Those who have played it and aren't going to buy the conversions should be acidified. It's easily one of the best car games to make it to the Engine and NES. The latter looks acceptable but the Engine version is even tastier. Also, that morally superior game that promotes peace, Operation Wolf, makes a belated appearance on the Engine, as will Tiger Road. Following much in the vein of Operation Wolf, New Zealand Story will make it to a PC Engine near you soon. Well, at least both games share shades-wearing baddies.

On the Game Boy, Nemesis will make a welcome appearance in December while Hyper Lode Runner is already on general sale. I don't even know why I bother with the Game Boy anymore. You're obviously all going to buy that Atari thing. So it's got colour, moves really fast without blurring and can have up to eight people on it simultaneously. The Game Boy is a true hand-held. Long live the Game Boy! Well, I like it anyway.

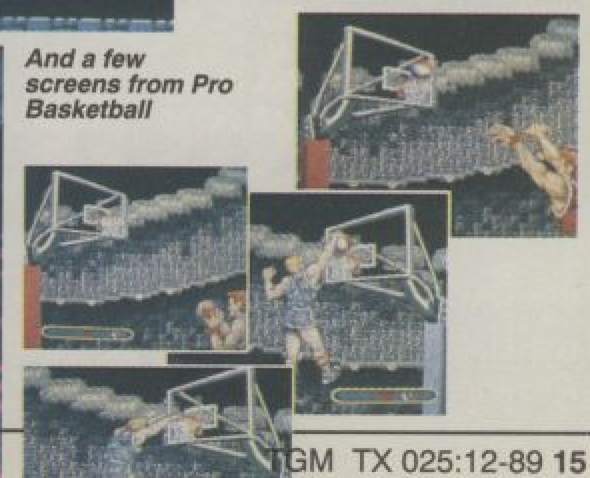
Guess what? That's it for another month. You really should come over and live in Japan. Actually on second thoughts, it's a good thing that you don't. All you'd do is ruin our brilliant economy. I've seen your interest rates — rather you than me. So I guess, till next month, it's a big sayonara from me and a big sayonara from him. Sayonara.





Mr Heli (left) and RoboKid (above and right), with Darius II (below) coming soon

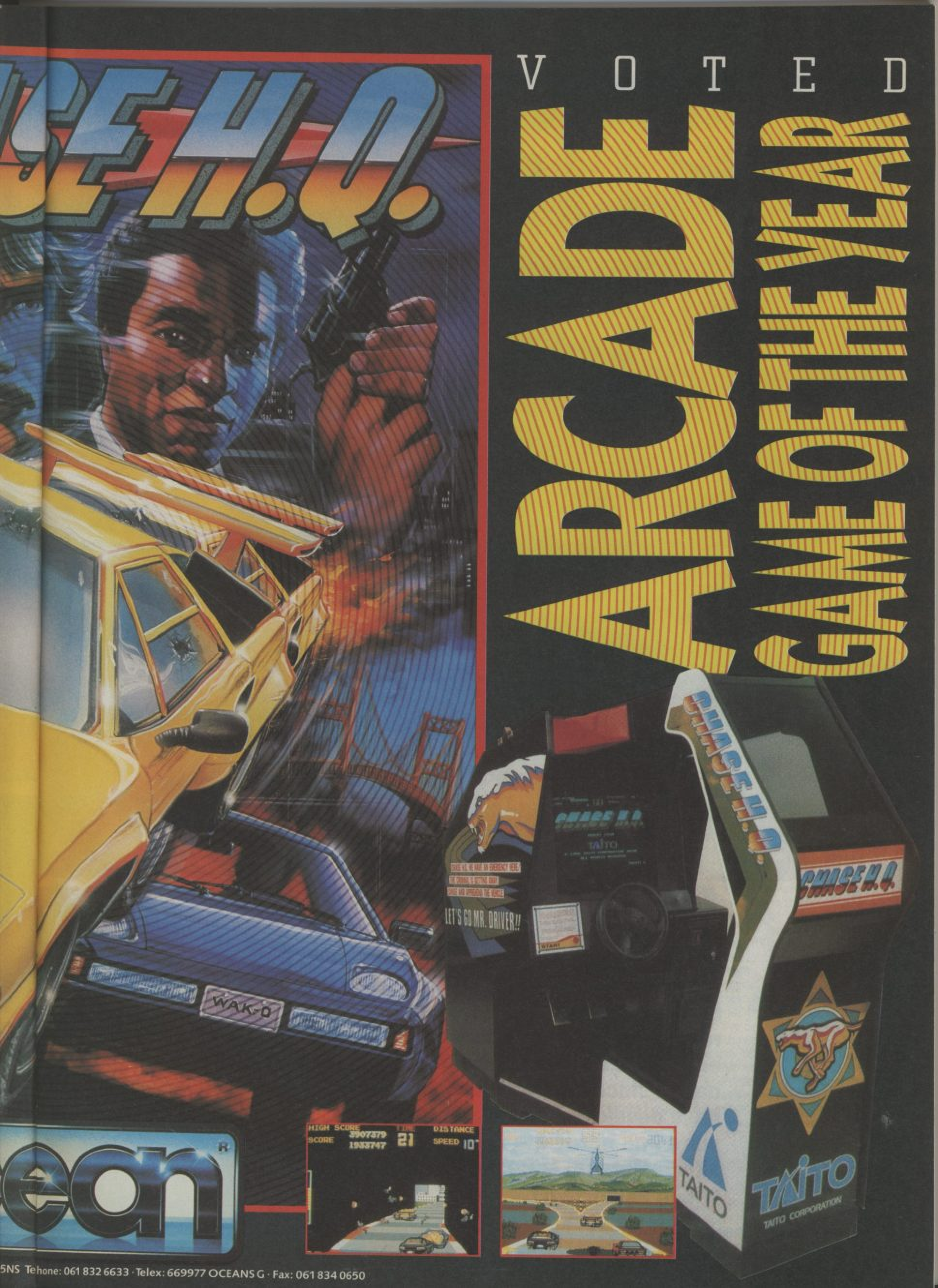




And a few screens from Pro Basketball



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Take the wheel of your turbo-charged Porsche as you and your partner go in pursuit of dangerous criminals all driving an evil array of souped-up roadsters.
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along the roughest of dirt tracks and through busy tunnels – if you can hold the line! The low life can run, but they can't hide...
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LET'S GO MR. DRIVER!!
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SCORE 1933747
DISTANCE
SPEED

Reach for

subLogic

the innovators of the home flight simulation, and masters of the art, seem to be taking it easy of late. Their last release was the raved-over Jet, however, they've not been sitting on their hands since. The American specialists have developed a new range of software and hardware to test your flying skills. Marshal M Rosenthal met them whilst skydiving!?



the skies



At last a simple assignment for a change... 'Marshal,' says the Editor, 'go see subLogic and find out what's new in their line of flight simulation software.' Sounds like fun, their Flight Simulator program started the genre after all. Just a nice comfortable jet ride through the skies of Chicago, and then on to their headquarters in Champaign, Illinois.

No — nothing's *that* simple.

Next thing I know, I'm inside a Cessna; with that first step being some 10,000 feet up. A parachute strapped to my back and a too-small helmet pinching the ears. Where are the people from subLogic to interview? The pilot turns his head as if to answer and points straight down, tipping the plane as he does so. The effect being that I go straight down. As in out of the plane!

The wind whips at my face as a million invisible hands press upwards with an intensity beyond description. A momentary feeling of dizziness, combined with the exhilaration of being totally free. Below are the folks I've come to see. Flattening into a streamlined torpedo, I shoot downwards to become the third point of a star formation; the others being that of Doug Meyers (subLogic's Director of Product Development) and Mike Woodley (Scenery Disk Coordinator).

A lot of interviews start with a cup of coffee, but you can forget that here. So I turn the table, err... make that airspace over to Meyers. 'It was never our intention to create a niche,' he begins. 'Our founders, Bruce Artwick and Stu Moment, were both involved in microcomputer simulations when they met at the University of Illinois in the early Seventies. Artwick was developing a microprocessor-based 3-D graphics package, while Moment had flight experience as an instructor at the University's airport. Together, they saw the need to let people get a real feeling of what it was like to fly via a computer simulation. 1979 saw the first Flight Simulator program for the new Apple II, and propelled us into the premiere position.

'We've made many improvements since then,' notes Myers, 'especially upon entering the 68000 market [Amiga and ST]. Now we work with menus rather than editor screens, do multiple windowing, and external views that can even include looking back at yourself. Plus, the speed of the animation can be 'boosted' by turning off the solid, filled graphics and just using wire-frame.'

Meyers continues: 'Enhancing and refining our products is an ongoing thing — adding new items like textured 3-D runways and realistic cloud coverage. The IBM Flight Sim is better than ever, and owes a lot to our ST/Amiga versions (which are due for added work and an upgrade in 1990). We've even a program [Instant Facilities Locator] which lets you dispense with having to look up an airport's north and east coordinations in order to take off from a specific location. IFL does it all from a simple menu.'

Woodley interjects to mention that 1990 will see the release of Flight Simulator Jr. Designed for eight-year-olds and up, Flight Sim Jr enables the user to learn how to fly by selecting specific areas of the program for them to control. Put simply, the program will instruct and monitor any aspect of flying under user control, while maintaining the rest needed to stay in the air.

A new version of Jet will also appear, with so many improvements that one might think of it as a new product entirely . Also new will be Flight Simulator: ATP (Airline Transport Pilot). 'This gives you the opportunity to fly a commercial airline,' points out Woodley. 'You make the decisions necessary in order to have a safe flight. It's full of all the 'little' problems, too. Like weather reports that aren't always accurate [what does 40% chance of showers really mean?]. And remember that the weather changes as you fly from one city to the next.' ATP allows four flight modes: auto flight (fully automatic), vectored flight, nav-aid flight, and free flight (a good way to learn is by having most of the functions done automatically while you main-



PRESS ANY KEY

SPECIAL NOTE: For those interested, there is a club devoted to flight simulation called the Computer Pilots Association of America. Members receive a monthly newsletter, participate in online discussions, and interact with others throughout the country. Interested parties should contact them at CPAA, PO Box 25216, Alexandria, Virginia 22313.

tain one aspect). There are four different aircraft to fly, and new-generation graphics allow up to eight aircraft to be displayed on screen at once (Air Traffic Control can issue over 50 commands and recognise more than ten pilot inputs).

We keep falling (I hope these guys realise that we will have to open these 'chutes eventually). They seem preoccupied with the new Scenery disks.

'Which requires plenty of hard work,' says Woodley. 'Each must be accurate and exact — which requires plenty of investigation into the area. No-one is able to physically visit every site, so we rely on maps and information provided by government reports, airport maps and oblique aerial photography. We even get postcards and pictures from people who want us to be sure to include their favourite landmark or location. The end result is that we have extremely detailed and exact markings for some 16,000 airports.'

Scenery disk #9 is a good example of attention to detail. It covers over 3000 miles of the mid-West United States, including Chicago, St Louis (ahh... my home town) and Cincinnati. Exquisite 3-D detail, of course. Go ahead and fly Chicago's Midway airport, or through St Lou's Gateway Arch. Woodley points out that the Mississippi river is rendered in great detail all the way from Wisconsin to Tennessee.

Meyers adds that Hawaiian

"They saw the need to let people get a real feeling of what it was like to fly via a computer simulation."

CURRENT SCENERY: Default USA Scenery
INS alphanumeric facility search
DEL choose another scenery area
ENTER select highlighted location
ESC exit this locator menu
↑ ↓ PgUp PgDn HOME END
1. Chester, 3B9
2. Chicago - Blue Island, Howell, 3HW
3. Chicago - Lansing Municipal, 3HA
4. Chicago - Merrill C. Meigs, CGX
5. Chicago - Midway, MDW
6. Chicago - O'Hare Intl., ORD
7. Chicago - Schaumburg Air Park, 06C
8. Chicago - West Chicago, DuPage, DPA
9. Chico Municipal, CIC

Odyssey is a bit of a departure from the standard Scenery disk. 'First because there's an adventure game built in — where you must locate the secret jewel of the Goddess Pele. A lot of people have written in asking for something like this — so here it is. But you can ignore this feature entirely if you wish,' he adds. 'Arrows indicate where to fly next but stay completely transparent if you don't fly to the starting point for the adventure.' The disk covers the 400-mile long chain of 30 airports, using visual flight (sight-seeing mode) and VFR features, plus the beauty of Downtown Honolulu, Pearl Harbour on the Island of Oahu, and, of course, the crater of Mauna Loa — one of Hawaii's most volatile volcanoes.

Flying into the crater brings up the second unusual aspect of this disk; a series of fantasy worlds where the laws of reality operate just a tad differently from the norm. Both Myers and Woodley refuse to give too much away here — but who can resist noting the world which consists solely of an average kitchen? Or the fact that our plane has been reduced to the size of a common housefly?

Approaching us from the west is a disk-shaped object. 'It's okay,' grins Woodley, 'that's just our new UFO game — a bit of a departure for us in a number of ways.' He beckons to the saucer and we feel a tractor beam lock onto us. In another moment, we're inside the craft.

'Look around,' says Myers. 'Note the anti-grav propulsion system, aerodynamic eliminator and electronic jamming equipment. We created UFO to be a whole new type of simulator — one with its own set of rules that must be obeyed.'

UFO not only lets you explore flying (with a teleport option), it even includes two games. In Energy Trader, you approach the city of your choice and begin draining energy to take back up to the Mother Ship orbiting the earth where you can exchange it for credits. Cities that come with the program include San Francisco, Miami and Washington DC — the Hawaii disk may also be used. You've no weapons and must stay undetected, so beam up as much energy as possible before the CITY DEFENSE ALERT message appears. The same goes when directing the beam at individual buildings. 'Drain off too much and the building will implode,' adds Myers, who agrees mischievously that seeing this happen will probably be one of the first things tried out in the game. The second game is Earth Craft Chase. This lets you follow Earthian flying vehicles and scoop them up with the tractor beam. A good way to drive their pilots crazy.

We continue to skim low, passing over Chicago. 'The philosophy behind our line is integration,' stresses Myers. 'Every product is designed to work with the rest — to enhance and take advantage of the latest technological advances. You experience the 'World of Flight' in a true way that enables you to expand into actually going out to fly a plane. This is why we're putting out Flight Controls I.' He's referring to the new hardware peripheral that accurately duplicates the yoke control of an aircraft, eliminating the two-handed approach that many joystick-like devices use. 'Our intent,' he says, 'is to teach good habits about the serious business of flying, which is why learning to use controls correctly is important.' Myers notes that Flight Controls I 'attaches' itself to the parent simulation through a disk program — and that each computer requires a unit with a specifically designed plug.

The ship lowers the landing pod and I disembark. Alone, to watch the UFO rise straight up as if shot by a rubber band. I'm a little piqued at the 'boys' for dumping me in the middle of St Louis (nothing to do here on a Sunday afternoon) — but then the saucer stops, directs an energy beam at nearby Busch stadium, and I watch it implode to rubble. Kind of a creative way to say goodbye.



INFORMATION

SUBLOGIC CORPORATION: 501 Kenyon Road, Champaign, Illinois 61820, USA.

Flight Controls I is to be available for the IBM, ST and Amiga.
Flight Simulator is available now on IBM, ST, Amiga and C64.
Flight Simulator Jr and ATP will be first out on IBM.
Jet is already available on IBM, ST and Amiga. The 1990 version will out be first on IBM, and later on ST and Amiga.
Hawaiian Odyssey Scenery Disk is to be seen on IBM, ST, Amiga and C64.
Scenery Disk #9 is out now on IBM, ST and Amiga.
UFO will be available on the IBM, followed by Amiga and ST.

TOMORROW'S WHIRLED

PART 2

And so here we are, teetering on the final decade of the Twentieth Century. If anyone knows what the future holds for games software, it's the companies who make it. And those individuals who make that final decision on what gets released all over you, the unsuspecting public. So, that old crystal ball gazer, Mel Croucher, has been probing the future plans of sundry software supremos, as he goes where no gerbil has gone before...

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

As I wandered lonely as a cloud through last October's Earls Court PC Circus, the first thing that struck me was the total lack of new ideas in gameplay. The same living dead themes, secondhand sound and frantic graphics. The next thing that struck me was a hit squad from Channel Four who successfully beat me to a pulp due to a wee problem concerning a documentary on hacking. Which is why, dear and faithful reader, I'm writing this from the intensive care unit of the Clive Sinclair Memorial Wing, Saint Samantha's Hospital for the Sick of Heart, Belize. It's very lonely in here, with nothing but intravenous tequila and a night nurse to keep me going, but at least a few of my computing colleagues have popped in to chew the fat. Mean bastards, whatever happened to grapes? My first visitor is that Freescaping Incentive boss, Ian Andrew.

MEL: Just pull up a wheelchair, and watch out for my life-support plug, Ian. Now then, what do you reckon TGM readers can expect from games software in the Nineties? What will Incentive have to offer?
IAN: Increasing realism. 3-D software. Games will become a complete experience, so that players will feel that they are `there', actually inside the gaming experience.
MEL: So no more pitiful blobs pretending to be computerised personalities?
IAN: Rather than playing with blobs on the screen, you'll actually be in a fake electronic environment. In the lifetime of TGM readers, this environment will become more exciting than the real world. I can see computer fantasies becoming genuine alternative realities.
MEL: Are you worried about publishing that sort of thing? Are there any dangers in total realism?
IAN: No, not at all. Not even when we get perfect sound and perfect video. Sorry, but I forsee no problem at all. What will happen in the Nineties is multi-user experience, being plugged into other people for real.
MEL: Sounds just like me. Do you want to hazard a guess as to when this will happen?
IAN: A minimum of five years, maximum ten. And I really mean that. Bedpan?

As Ian hurriedly leaves via the aroma therapy ward, I spy the Product Manager for Mastertronic's budget software. Yes, it's that well-known nude photographic model Andy Wright.

MEL: Andy, it's your job to decide what the public will be playing in the future. Give me your predictions for software as we head towards the 21st Century.
ANDY: 8-bit software is gonna die out, and so will you unless you lay off that medicine. The IBM PCs and consoles will take over.
MEL: What about entertainment on STs and Amigas?
ANDY: You know what I think? I reckon that the ST and the Amiga ought to be turned into consoles, too! Seriously. Ban the keyboard altogether.
MEL: Don't a large number of players like typing in their responses during gameplay.
ANDY: Nah! Players don't want all that old garbage. We don't use keyboards in real life do we, they just get in the way of reality!
MEL: Is there anything original on the UK games horizon?
ANDY: In terms of software, nah, not a lot. If you ask me, we'll be following the American market. Can I ask you something, Mel?
MEL: Naturally. Ask away.
ANDY: Bedpan?

Who's this behind the curtains, round the next cot to mine? Well, if it ain't ex-Microdealer main man Lee Ginty, I was wondering where he'd got to recently.

MEL: You're looking very chipper Lee. Have you got any predictions for software in the Nineties and beyond?
LEE: Sure, but you have to look at it in terms of hardware first. Technology is going faster than the software can keep up with it.
MEL: Is the speed of progress increasing all the time?
LEE: The Nineties will be the biggest and best thing that any consumer market has seen so far. You'll be able to play games, you'll be able to smell, taste, feel and live in electronic games.
MEL: Yummy! What formats are going to dominate over the next five or ten years?



LEE: In what format? CD, audio-visual, Konix chairs, whatever it is I don't think it matters. The player won't be bothered if it's an 8-bit or 16-bit or a lump of cheese, it doesn't matter. Players are concerned with what it looks and sounds and feels like.
MEL: And what about software themes?
LEE: I've no idea. Like I say, we are getting into the most exciting phase of human entertainment ever. Themes don't change, they just get better. 'Scuse me I'm off. Talk to this guy... Deadpan?

And this guy turns out to be the European Sales Manager of Accolade, that Scotch and ice with a twist of lime, Stuart Matthey.

MEL: You've been in this business since the earliest video games, haven't you? What's going to happen in the Nineties?
STUART: Yes, I've been with it since the beginning of the first video consoles, and in all that time I've never done an interview. How exciting! OK, here we go. You know and I know that video games are very much a part of human lives. It's taken a long time, but the Nineties will see computer games accepted as mainstream home entertainment.
MEL: Are you saying that computer games still aren't mainstream?
STUART: Compared to TV, video and LPs, not quite. The Nineties will see everyone involved, from toddlers to pensioners.
MEL: So the range of titles is going to expand.
STUART: Dead right. And if it's on compact disc, PC, whatever, it'll be part of a home entertainment centre, as common as a radio set. The format won't matter. You can already pick up software titles that suit most tastes after a bit of a search, but by the end of this century there will be titles to suit everyone and anyone. And personally, I can't wait!
MEL: Really? Bedpan?

Where'd he go? Ho hum, my bottle needs changing. Nurse... nurse! Who's this? You're not a nurse, you're Elite's boss, Steve Wilcox.

STEVE: I bet you're going to ask me what the future of software is going to be?
MEL: How did you know that?
STEVE: It's in your script.
MEL: Correct. The buzzword right now seems to be `consoles'. Predict the future of software for TGM readers.
STEVE: As far as Elite is concerned, we are
paying increasing attention to consoles. In a couple of years it may well be the newer technology, CD-I and the like. What that means is that it's going to be much more expensive to perform as a games publisher.
MEL: So how can smaller companies stay in the game?
STEVE: It may mean that smaller outfits such as ourselves can't afford to.
MEL: Will smaller, independent software houses have to come under the umbrellas of the major players?
STEVE: I certainly hope not. We'll have to try and make the changes gradually, as and when we can afford to.
MEL: Funny you should mention that, I think I need changing. Can you call someone...

Oh dear, visiting hour's nearly over. Who's this bearded geezer waving a law suit at me? Is it the chappie who's come to change my paper towel? Not a bit of it, it's the doctor come to push me over The Edge, none other than Tim Langdell.

MEL: What's up, doc? How long have I got? What does the future hold?
TIM: My guess as to what's going to happen in the future...
MEL: Guess? Don't you know, doc?
TIM: Anyone who says they `know' is lying. The very best any of us can do is guesswork. My guess after following the whole thing through from 8-bit (we were the first ever to do a Spectrum game, don't forget) is that we will be focusing on animated cartoons, using interactive techniques. For example, with Snoopy and Garfield we've already crunched down over ten megabytes of graphics into half a meg.
MEL: Is it all about memory and storage capacity? Aren't concepts and fresh ideas important?
TIM: When the facility is there with CD-ROM, interactive disc or whatever, I want to use the same software engines to produce virtual interactive movies. That's where I think the Nineties are going.
MEL: You know something? I thought that's where the Eighties were going. It's a funny old world. **TIM:** Bedpan?

If ever I get out of Saint Samantha's, I'm going to write the definitive guide to the future of computing. But you'll have to wait until next month to read it. Nurse! Nurse?

♦♦VIRGIN's SANTA♦♦



Don't miss out on an extra special stocking this Christmas when Santa wil be awarding the lucky winners with:

5 FIRST PRIZES OF

£1,000 worth of software of your choice, or an Amiga or ST plus £500 worth of software of your choice

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Any one of the six Virgin Games arcade classics mentioned earlier.

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CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
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Simply collect three tokens - you'll find one in each game - and send them to Virgin Games. The prize draw will take place on 29th January 1990.

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SHINOBI

You're masashi, a tough ninja warrior on a mission to clear the town from rebel martial arts fanatics. Explore the scrolling urban landscape and beat the hell out of your opponents, but watch out for the end-of-level guardians.

SILKWORM

It's not true! Even after months of negotiation with the Ruskies and despite a mass exodus out of Afghanistan, we're still under threat. There's no one left to press the Nuke button so the battle has switched to copters and plane. Non-stop shoot-'em-up arcade action.

GEMINI WING



The aliens have had enough. They're not going to take their brethren being blasted on computer screen any more. So they've come down in their hordes to blast the pitiful race of carbon-based life forms called humans. Can you stop them? Somebody has to do it.

CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Compete in formula one races in Brazil, America, France, Monaco, Germany, Spain and Japan, Race hard, but watch out for other cars. Colliding can be fatal. And do visit the pits for fuel and repairs.

NINJA WARRIORS

COMING SOON!

Can you survive brutal enemy onslaught? Fight with hand, foot and dagger to rid the street of the scum that dare infest your home town. A classic arcade conversion.

DOUBLE DRAGON II

COMING SOON!

Ferocious two-player simultaneous martial arts mayhem. Evil fiends have captured your girlfriend - it's up to you and your brother to rescue her. Don't fail. Through the town, countryside, mountains and finally into the lair. Use whatever weapons you can find to stay alive.

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Robin Candy's PLAYING TIPS

It's Christmas! Well, not at the time of writing it isn't. It's hard to get all festive at the beginning of October. S'pose I could fake it: 'How was it for you then?' 'Oh, Christmassy.' But it doesn't really come over right, does it?
A slight error crept into last month's Playing Tips. The Batman pokes weren't for Batman — The Movie but Batman — The Caped Crusader. When the poke was written, the latest Batman game hadn't been released and I didn't realise that there would be any confusion, sorry!
So, without further ado (or even a mention of crossfade sampling with my new sampler), it's on with the tips.

Xenon II
(ST/Amiga)

Steve Peiris and Michael Neri reckon this is probably the best shoot-'em-up this year and we'd have to agree with them. Here are some of their tips.



Level One
Shop A: Buy health if needed
Shop B: Sell rear shot, buy double shot, buy side shot.
Guardian B: Shoot at eye. Stay at the bottom of the screen, and push down if necessary to avoid the mines, but do not do so when trying to shoot at the eye as your range is very limited. Try to move in close and strike when the guardian's tongue is retracted.
Level Two
Shop A: Buy health if needed. Only buy side shots if you bought one on the previous level.
Guardian A: Move up and left and wait till all of the guardian has appeared. Shoot one of the eyes and then stop firing. Now manoeuvre directly above one of the tubes. As soon as you get a chance, shoot the second eye. When the screen starts to scroll downwards, stay slightly up to avoid the worms that come out of the tubes at the bottom of the creature. Dodge any worms that do get in your way and shoot the final eye.
Shop B: Sell side shot. If you have enough money sell your canon to help finance buying two lasers. Buy one or two lasers. Buy power-up. Buy health.
Guardian B: Shoot the web-like barriers on the left and right and move up the side of the spider. As soon as the spider moves follow it. Move into a position directly beneath the spider and shoot it in the mouth. When it dies, go down and collect the cash as it falls.
Level Three
Shop A: Buy power-up. Buy health if needed.
Guardian A: Shoot in the eyes with a laser.
Shop B: Sell rear shot. Buy laser. Buy power-up Buy side shots. Buy health if needed.
Guardian B: Move left and wait for the snake to appear. Shoot its head constantly with a laser. When he goes into a hole move to the right and wait. As soon as it emerges start shooting again.
Level Four
Shop A: Buy side shots. Buy health. Buy Nashwan.
Guardian A: Avoid the fireballs and move left. Shoot smaller heads with side shots then shoot its tail with a laser. Move down and then sweep back and forth across the screen while shooting at its head with lasers.
Shop B: Buy laser. Buy power-up. Buy health. Experiment with some of the new weapons.
Guardian B: Avoid the creature's tongue and move to the top left of the screen. Shoot its eyes with side shots and move as far up as possible. The creature will now reposition itself where it can easily be killed with side shots.
Level Five
Shop A: Sell everything and buy it back at a profit. Buy extra lives with the remainder of your cash.
Guardian A: Shoot the smaller turrets with your lasers then go for the main turret.
Guardian B: Shoot the boosters with your lasers then shoot the smaller turrets with your side shots. Destroy the laser beamers. When all of the turrets have been destroyed move down and strike at the bottom centre.

Sword of Sodan
(Amiga)

Mark Brajkovich and Kanwar Sandhu, **Ontario Canada.**
Type in NANCY on the high score table for infinite lives.

Tusker
(C64)

Following on from last month's tips here's the second installment in the Tusker solution.
Level Two
On the first screen avoid the large monster by walking in an uneven rhythm. If you try to walk in a steady pattern across the screen you'll be killed. Also, on the first screen wait for the pot to drop.

Collect a key from outside the village and enter. Go through the hut to the left of the bouncing skulls screen. Exit by the top corner and pass through the inside of the village to the screen which has a locked hut. Collect the medicine bottle.

Enter the large huts through the round door with the face above it. Move right and collect the slingshot and matches from the room which contains the altar. Use the matches and punch the idol to burn it. Continue to punch the idol and collect the orb from behind it.

Enter the screen to the right and give the medicine bottle to the angry witch doctor (again use the punch movement). The chief will now stand up and you will see a key in the objects part of the status area.

Exit the village area and give the key to one of the natives outside the screen with the sliding gate on it. Enter through the open gates to exit to the next section.

Shadow of the Beast

(Amiga)

This month's Star Tips winner is Stephen Murphy from Lanarkshire for his complete guide to Shadow of the Beast.

At the start of the game go left. Do not go down the well. When going through the woods watch out for the two small spikes in the ground which spring up as you walk over them. Keep going left until you come to a tree which says 'IN' and go in.

Once inside beware of the flame which shoot across the floor. Now go right, down, left, down, right and avoid the locusts. The go down, left, down, left and you should be now crossing a bridge. Whatever you do don't go left because you will fall and die. Go down, right, down, left, down, left and keep hitting the ball that the monster is holding (remember to keep ducking or your head will get fried). Once the monster has died you will have a plasma bolt to fire. Now go right, up, right, down, right, down, left, left (watch for the drips from above) and jump across a hole to get a key. Go right and drop down the hole. Go right and collect the potion then up, up, right, up, right, up, left, up, left, up, right. Kill the monster with the two heads. Then take the first up and go left until you see a switch. Hit this. This will allow you to collect the power punch later in the game.

Go right and take the first up then go right for increased strength. Go back left. Continue passed the skeleton and take the key. Now go right then the first down, right, down, right, up, right (watch out for the snails), down as far as possible, left. Take the first down, right, down, continue right until you get to a potion. Now go left and take the first down, right, down, left and watch out for the flame. Go down, left, down, left, up, left, down, left, up, right and collect the power punch. Go left, down, down and keep heading right until you find a well. Kill the monster and go up. You should now be above ground.

Continue right whilst kicking pillars to increase your strength. When you get to the castle go passed the door and jump up to get the torch. Go back and enter the castle.

Once inside, go left, up, right and collect the extra strength. Go down, right, up as far as possible, left, down, left and collect the potion. Beware of the monsters jumping out of the trap doors in the floor. Then go up, right, to collect a potion and finally the spanner at the far right. Now go as far left as possible then down, right, down, right and fall down, then left and cross over the bridge, down, right, down, left and continue left until you find a chest.

Hit it and collect the gun. Now go as far right as possible until you find a force field. Use the spanner to go through it then go up, left, down, left, up, right, down, left as far as possible then down, right and kill the three headed dragon. Go through the door.

Keep going right, whilst hitting pillars for extra strength, till you get to a giant monster. Hit the pincers above and below its tongue until it blows up. If you have the second key go through the door and leave the castle. Go right. Hit the pillars to build up your strength and finally kill the dragon at the end. You've finished the game.

Rolling Thunder

(ST)

Keith Hammond, New Malden.
When the face is laughing on the title screen type in 'jimbbby'. The cheat mode is now activated, you now have infinite lives and can progress through levels by pressing I.

Gemini Wing

(All Formats)

James Chan, Liverpool.
Type in the following codes to skip to higher levels of the game.

Level 3 — CLASSICS
Level 4 — WHIZZKID
Level 5 — GUNSHOTS
Level 6 — DOODGUYZ
Level 7 — D.GIBSON



Batman — The Movie

(C64)

Mark Stuttard, Fallowfield.
Complete the first level and load up the Batmobile stage. Then lose all your lives. When you are asked to rewind to Side B, don't. Instead just press play to load up the cathedral level. You will now have infinite lives.

Vigilante

(C64)

Edwin Mak, Battersea.
Type in 'green crystal' on the high score table. Now when pressing F1 during the game you will awarded with an extra life, while F8 will advance you a level.

Space Quest 3

(All Formats)

Greg Wise from Basingstoke **has supplied these tips on how to get out of the spaceship on this popular Sierra Online game.**

At the beginning of the game go down a screen and then go right. You will see the junk conveyor. Get into it and go to the top. Type 'Get Up' and walk in the opposite direction to the conveyor belt.

Walk right to the edge of the belt and type 'Jump'. Walk left for the next two screens and type 'Climb Down' to get onto the machine. Move left to the other side of the screen and exit to the next screen. Position yourself in the middle of the screen and type 'Press Claw' to release the claw mechanism. Wait for it to grab the warp motivator and return to the machine.

Move Roger and the machine right through the next three screens. Position yourself at the front of the screen and type 'Press Claw'. The motivator should now be placed in the ship below. Then return to the screen where you originally found the machine. Climb down onto the blue platform and fall down the chute into the pile of junk. Walk over to the wall on the left. Take the reactor and wait. Once the lights have gone dim walk over to the ladder and climb up. Try and remember the whereabouts of this hole. Take the ladder.

Altered Beast

(Sega)

Denis Kayan, London.
Press up-left then button one and you will start the game with more energy than usual.





Go up a screen then go right. Go through the tunnel. You will now be attacked by a large rat. Go back to the hole. Use the ladder and climb down it to get back to the cave. Get the reactor again and return to the surface. Go back to the tunnel and take some wire off the wall. Continue to the next screen which contains a large robot's head. Walk carefully around to the front of its cheek and type 'Climb Head'.

Walk to the right side of the ship and type 'Use Ladder'. Climb the ladder and walk carefully along the top of the spaceship to the round hatch. Open the hatch and climb inside. You will see a picture of Roger's head and an open compartment in the floor. Type 'Use Reactor' then 'Use Wire'. The ship is now ready for flying. Climb into the cockpit, start up and type 'Look At Computer'. Press one for engines, then seven for radar and three for takeoff. An alarm should warn you that you cannot go any further. Look at the computer again and press eight for weapons system. Now press F for front shields then press the Spacebar to blast a hole in the ship. You're now free to roam wherever you please.

£50 WORTH OF SOFTWARE MUST BE WON!

Each month the sender of the best set of tips, POKEs or maps will receive an incredible £50-worth of software of their own choice, along with a TGM T-shirt to keep you warm through the winter nights. Send all your gaming information to: **Robin 'sampler' Candy's Playing Tips, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** Once last tip before I depart for another month. Don't work late nights at the office when Warren Lapworth decides to bring his dinner of curry sauce on chips to help him through those last minute reviews. What a hum!

Project Firestart

(C64)

If you're having problems with this game just use these tips and maps from Terry Cook of Bravo Troop BFPO 106 **and it shouldn't be long till you complete the game.**

1) Open the oxygen control valve and raise the lead shield in the radiation control room to keep the Muties down.

2) The plasma gun is very effective, use it wisely, there is only one on the ship.

3) You cannot enter Cryo until Annar wakes up.

4) You cannot gain access to the bridge without the passcards from the firestart labs.

5) Once you have got the passcards and the science log, you will always meet a Mutie near the lift in the firestart labs.

6) Rescue the women from Cryo. Take her down the lift in G1 to the disposal pod room and put her in the waste pod. Later eject the pod in enviro control.

7) Do not enter the other room in corridor 'F', it is full of mutants.

8) After setting the self destruct switch, radio the base to inform them. Don't forget to eject the pod.

9) Be as quick as possible. If you take too long, Annar will shut off the ship's power.

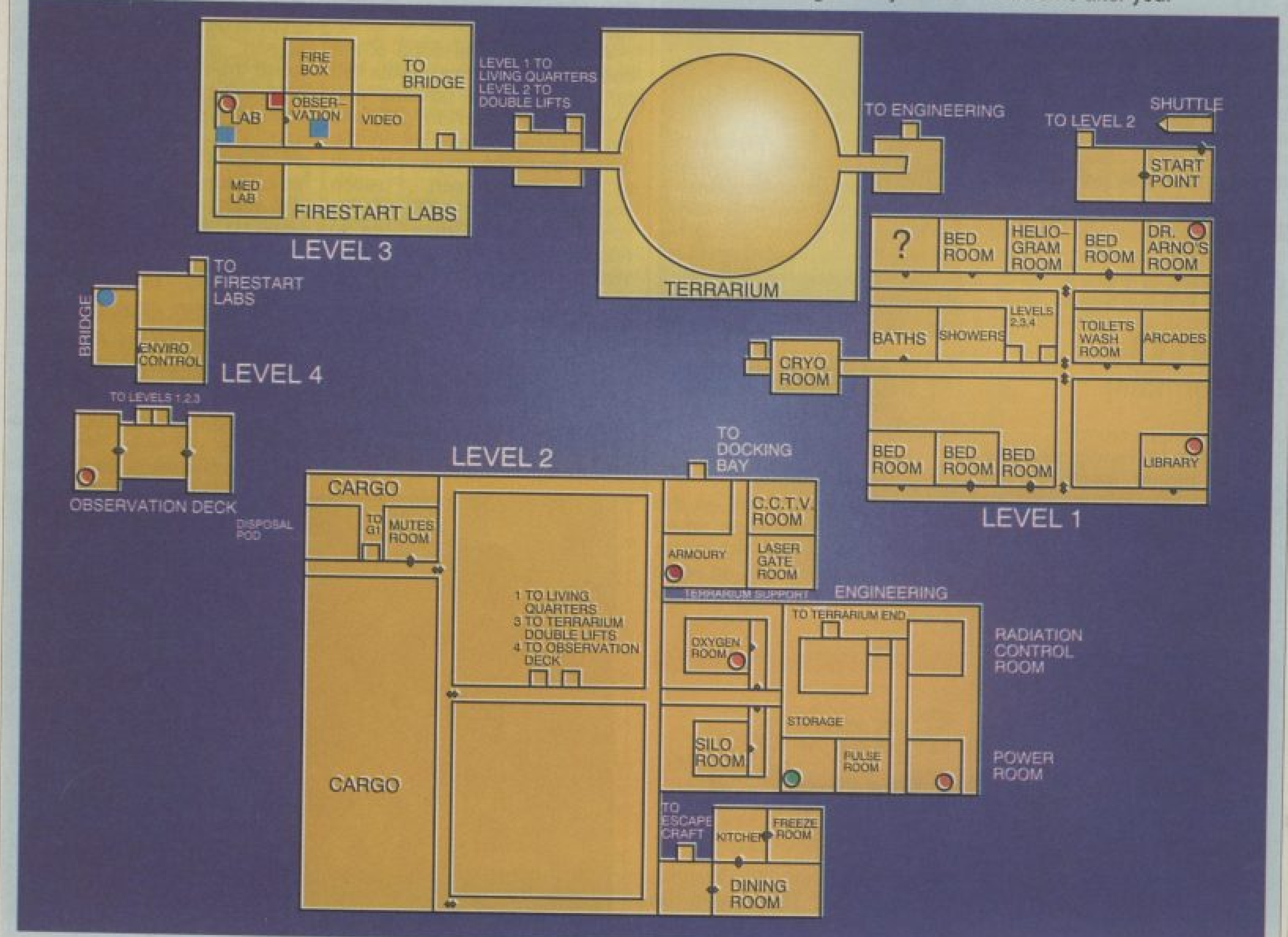
10) There is no fifth room in corridor 'J'.

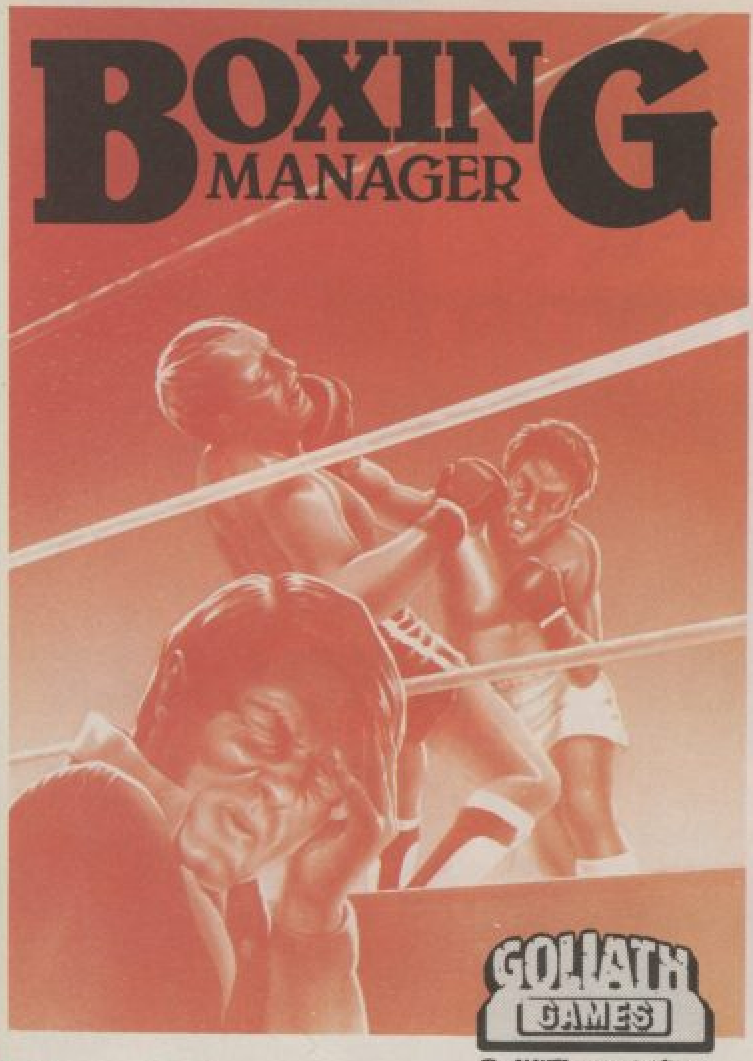
11) Your health drops on entering the freezer room.

12) To get to the escape craft you have to go through two rooms and open a set of doors. Both rooms contain Muties.

13) Each first-aid box can only be used twice.

14) If you escape from the ship after Annar has woken up he will come after you.





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You instinctively lean forward and press a button on your control panel. Two jet rockets shoot out from the side of your ship, spinning through space, and blast into the enemy ships. You duck and dive till the rest have either eaten space dust, or bugged out (wimps). It's over...

...Suddenly, from a side cavern, out shoot two larger fighter ships, with guns blaring. Behind them, two support fighters each firing plasma bolts. The leaders fly forward, one zooms left, the other right. What to do? You concentrate on one — the left one. You turn violently, the G-forces pulling at your neck muscles, roll into position and turn him into space garbage at the flick of your wrist.

The two smaller ships fly by you, their pilots passing you a sick grin. Why? You don't see it, you feel it. A plasma bolt ripping into the rear hold of your ship (there goes the bounty). Time to get outta here. You spin around and head for home, not before you send one of the support fighters to the galactic scrap heap. They may have one that battle, but you'll be back!

Back in the next 3-D space saga from Logotron, entitled STARBLAZE. Available at all good retailers for the Amiga and ST now, at just £19.99 (well-disguised plug).

But hang on a mo'. What's this? Another Logotron game to promote, who d'you think I am, Terry Wogan? Oh, well, here goes.

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SIM CITY

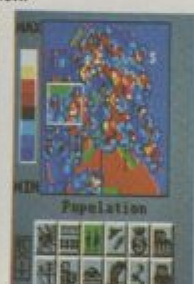
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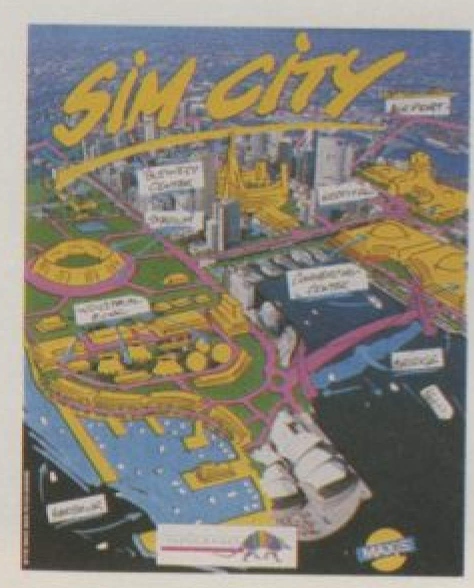
Build houses, streets, factories, airports, a stadium, or even nuclear power plants. Organise urban transport, hire police, firemen, bulldoze entire neighbourhoods.

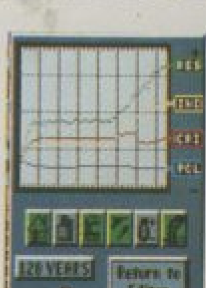
Raise and collect taxes, balance your budget, manipulate property values. Sim City is alive. It's loaded with animation and detailed sound effects. Build roads, cars appears. Lay tracks, trains go. Build an airport, planes fly. Neighbourhoods go upper-class. Areas deteriorate into slums. Small industries grow into huge factories. Everything is managed and animated in real



SIM CITY

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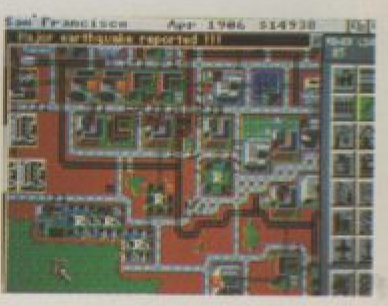




time. Every decision instantly influences the life of your town.

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INFOWORLD Volume II Issue 20 : "People playing Sim City are completely plugged into the world they create, disappearing for hours."
NEW YORK TIMES : "The model is very sophisticated, yet understandable. And just as important, it's fun, too."

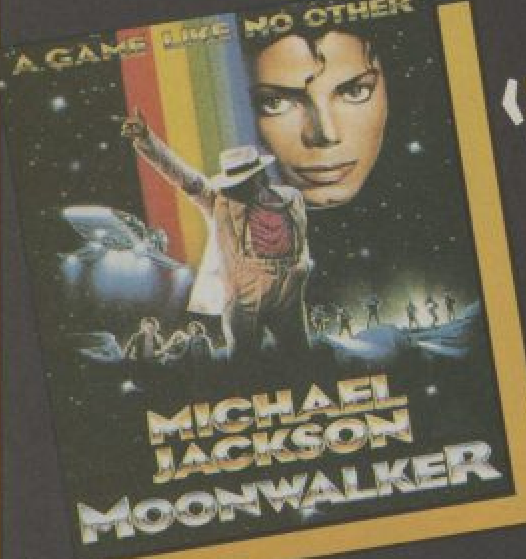






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CENTRE BYTES



✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ Christmas is a time for giving. ✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ So why not treat your computer to a few gifts this year. The Centre Bytes team have been out and about tracking down the latest add-ons for the Amiga, ST, Spectrum amd Commodore 64. Whether you're after a hard drive or a mouse mat there's something for everyone. But remember to stock up on plugs and batteries before the big day to avoid those Christmas Day blues brought on by non-working gifts. And do keep your guarantees in a safe place should something go wrong. ✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻✻

ALSO IN CENTRE BYTES



Amiga owners are spoiled for choice this Christmas. It's not a case of what's available, rather what do you want?

Hard disk
Amiga disk loading times are notoriously slow and coupled with the amount of disk swapping required by some programs, loading can be a real pain. A second drive may solve the problem of disk swapping but it doesn't really decrease loading times. The Commodore A590 hard disk (£399) provides 20Mb of storage capacity, fast access times, room for an additional 2Mb RAM and a SCSI port (so it can be linked to other SCSI hard disks). It's very easy to use, just plug it in and you're ready to go. Most application packages and some games now provide options to copy the program and save files to hard drive for retrieval at a fraction of the normal disk loading times.

Extra RAM
Sooner or later you're going to want a RAM expansion. Games are already filling the Amiga's memory to capacity and it's only a matter of time before games start to appear for 1Mb machines only. Most application packages already require a minimum of 1Mb RAM. Commodore's A501 RAM expansion is the most popular expansion kit available for the Amiga. It slots into the port on the underside of the computer, providing you instantly with an extra 512K RAM. There is also a battery backed-up clock which maintains the correct time and date even when the Amiga is switched off. The usual price of the unit is £129 but prices do vary from supplier to supplier, so do shop around. One of the cheapest outlets we found is Trilogic, who can supply Amiga RAM expansions for £89.99.

Modem
If after reading TGM's Comms articles, you may want to get involved in the world of bulletin boards and viewdata systems — but, you'll need a modem. The Designer Modem (£113.85) from Trilogic plugs into the serial port of the Amiga (a cable is supplied) and British Telecom's standard telephone socket — all you need then is some communication software which can be bought cheaply from Public Domain libraries. All the modem settings, such as baud rates and transmit/receive modes, are accessible from the modem's front panel while LEDs indicate the modem's current status. The accompanying manual explains all the communications jargon and procedures that you will need to understand to get started.

Amplification
The Amiga sound chip is one of the best featured in any home computer, but the quality of sound output through a TV or monitor often leaves a lot to be desired. However, the Amiga does contain two phono sound out sockets on the rear panel. These can be connected to a hi-fi, if your hi-fi includes an auxiliary in socket and you possess the relevant leads. If you don't then you'll find Trilogic's Miniamp 4 (£34.99) stereo speaker system a low-cost method of amplifying your Amiga (or virtually any other computer for that matter). The package includes all the necessary leads to connect your Amiga to the small amp as well as two small but powerful speakers. We've been trying one out in the office and it really does make a difference to hear Amiga music in glorious, pounding stereo.

Digitiser
Rombo's VIDI-Amiga (£114.95) is a real-time frame grabber which allows you to digitise pictures from video cameras and recorders. Connecting every thing up is simple; just plug the unit into the parallel port of the Amiga then plug your video source into the phono socket on the digitiser.

The incredible rate at which VIDI-Amiga grabs frames makes it very easy to use. Unlike some digitisers you don't need to pause the picture before you grab it. VIDI Amiga grabs frames at 1/50th second and can even grab a whole series of frames in one go. On the unexpanded A500 this is limited to four but 1Mb machines can grab a maximum of 16 frames in one go (great for animation).

One interesting feature is the window option. You can grab your frames as normal then define an area on screen to be your window. While displaying your chosen frame, VIDI-Amiga will then only show the video source in the window — creating a transparent effect.
The device is initially set to digitise in 16 shades of black and white but this can be changed to any 16 colours. This is particularly useful if you're grabbing frames from cartoons where the colours are vivid and there is very little shading.

Once you've grabbed all the frames you want, you can then organise them into a sequence and flick between them rapidly to create an animation. You can also use this with the window option and create animations within animations.

VIDI Amiga is an excellent package. Perhaps its best feature is that it is so easy to use, you don't have to be a 'techy' to produce amazing results. It's the ideal first-timer's package. Screens can also be saved in IFF format so you can load them into the Deluxe range of art utilities and really start having some fun!

MIDI
Perhaps one of the biggest disappointments with the Amiga is the lack of MIDI ports. Only recently has the Amiga started to steal some of the limelight hogged by the ST in the music world. Trilogic manufacture an excellent MIDI interface for the Amiga which is a lot more flexible than the ST's built-in MIDI ports. The MIDI 2 interface (£34.99) provides one MIDI In, one Out, one Thru and two extra ports which can be switched between either Out or Thru. This allows you to control up to four MIDI instruments directly from the Amiga, rather than using separate MIDI Thru boxes or linking the instruments together in a daisy chain using their Thru ports.

Document Scanner
The Geniscan GS4500 (£189.99) from Datel Electronics is a document scanner that allows you to scan pictures or text from magazines, books etc into your Amiga. Documents up to 105mm in width can be scanned in at up to 400 dots per inch. Images can be saved out in IFF format and then loaded into compatible art or desktop publishing software. The price includes Deluxe Paint II and Deluxe Print to help you manipulate your images. The normal retail price of these packages alone comes close to £100.



Just a few years ago the Spectrum world was buzzing with numerous add-ons. There were peripherals to interface your Spectrum to just about anything. The 16-bit revolution seems to have changed all that. Few add-ons are launched for the Spectrum these days and many of the devices available a few years ago have been discontinued.

Backup devices
Despite the recent amendment to the Copyright Act, Romantic Robot's Multiface range of backup cartridges are still available. Not only can you resave games out to tape or disk but the devices also allow you to print individual screens out or examine the program's code and make modifications. There are currently three models available: Multiface One (£34.95) for the Spectrum 48K, Multiface 128 (£39.95) for the Spectrum 48K/128K/+2 and Multiface 3 (£39.95) for the Spectrum +2A/+3.

Lightgun
Lightguns seem to be making a comeback. Amstrad launched their own model earlier in the year and received some mixed reviews. Now Cheetah Marketing have entered into the fray with the Defender (£24.95). The actual gun seems to be better designed than the Amstrad model. It's not so flimsy and seems to be more accurate. Bundled with the gun are six specially written games from Code Masters. These include an Operation Wolf clone, a shooting gallery game and a version of pinball (you shoot at the flippers to smash the ball around the screen). Sounds interesting.

Game Boy
If you can't bear to be parted from games for more than a brief period of time, then take a look at Nintendo's Game Boy. It's a pocket-size games unit with built-in liquid crystal display. While it may seem to resemble those hand-held LCD game and watch devices of the early Eighties, the Game Boy is actually a good deal more sophisticated. For a start it accepts cartridges so it isn't limited to one game, the display has been improved so that scrolling is relatively smooth, and the sound quality is amazing for such a small unit. Though Nintendo haven't yet officially launched the Game Boy in Britain yet it is available as a grey import from PC Engine Services priced £79.90. PC Engine Services also stock an ever increasing range of cartridges priced £24.90 each.

Joysticks
Games playing wouldn't be the same without a joystick. The range available these days is breathtaking — so much so that we've planned a giant joystick round up in the next issue of TGM. The current office favourites include Zip Stik Super Professional and Cruiser both from PowerPlay.

C64/128

Despite its age, the 64/128 seems to be hanging on long after pundits predicted its demise. This Christmas there are still a number of useful add-ons to increase the scope of your 64.

Reset cartridge
Backup cartridges have been around for a number of years now, so it seems a bit strange that yet another should be launched bearing in mind the increasing popularity of the 16-bit computers. The Power Cartridge from Bitcon Devices offers the usual program back-up facilities plus a number of extras at the low price of £14.95. Some of the other features include additional BASIC commands to enhance Commodore BASIC; turboload commands for both tape and disk, a reset button that allows you return to BASIC without disturbing the 64's memory (so you can enter pokes etc); a monitor program that allows



assembly/disassembly of machine code (as it's built-in to the cartridge it doesn't take up any of the 64's RAM); and extensive printer commands allow you to send a copy of the screen to an attached printer. Similar cartridges normally cost anything up to £20 above the price of the Power Cartridge. So if you're interested in this type of add-on this is the one to go for.

Datacassette
Before turboload games arrived you could expect a C64 game to take anything up to 20 minutes to load. While the turbo system cut down on loading time it also made it less reliable. As the C64 uses a dedicated tape deck it's hard to tell just what is causing a loading problem — it could be a faulty tape, or dirty or badly aligned tape heads. Mills Associates' Load It (£44.95 — with free video film of Top Gun, Temple of Doom or The Living Daylights) helps eliminate some of the problems with its easily-adjustable tape heads and LED lights which register the volume of the tape playing.

Disk drive
Alternatively, you could always opt for the speedier loading times of a disk drive. However, Commodore's own 1541 is rather slow by disk drive standards so it's better to go for the faster Oceanic OC-118 (£129.95) from Evesham Micros. Not only do you get the necessary leads to connect the drive to a 64/128 but a new operating system (GEOS), a paint program and a WYSIWYG word processor.

MIDI music
Serious musicians can get hold of a MIDI interface and sequencing package for £39.99 from Datel Electronics. The Advanced Music System (previously marketed by Firebird) is one of the better music packages to appear on the 64. Not only can you playback music using MIDI instruments but a built-in synthesizer option allows you to harness the power of the 64's sound chip and create your own sounds. Datel also market a sound sampler for the 64 (£49.95). Once a sound has been recorded it can be played forwards or backwards while editing features allow you to cut out unwanted material. A MIDI-compatible sequencer package is also included in the price.



PRESS ANY KEY

ATARI ST

The ST is in much the same position as the Amiga. Basically if you can get it for the Amiga there is likely to be a version for the ST.

General

Rombo's VIDI ST differs only slightly from the Amiga version and retails at the slightly lower price of £99.95. While Datel's Geniscan GS4500 ST retails at the same price (£189.99) as the Amiga version, the Deluxe utilities have been replaced by the Paintworks art program.

Internal drive upgrade

Some of the early STs contained half meg single-sided internal disk drives which can't load some information stored on double-sided disks. In fact they treat all disks as single-sided so if you format a double-sided disk you won't be able to use its full storage capacity. You shouldn't experience many problems with games (these are usually stored on single-sided disks) but utilities often require more disk space and are stored on double_sided disks. If you own one of these early machines (it will say in the manual if the drive is single- or double-sided) it is advisable to upgrade to a 1Mb drive. These are obtainable from Datel Electronics at £69.99 each.

However, you will need to open up your ST to fit tbe drive, and this will invalidate your guarantee.

External drive

If you're not keen on invalidating your guarantee then go for a second disk drive. MGT's Lifetime drive (£129.99) is a bit unusual because it can be used with several different computers including the Amiga, Spectrum, BBC and PCs. Obviously the ideal purchase if you own more than one computer.



If you live out in the middle of nowhere like the TGM Centre Bytes team, getting hold of all those little extras that make computing that much easier can be difficult.

Blank disks

Blank disks are a must for anyone with a disk drive. Unbranded (no manufacturer name) disks are usually much cheaper than the brand name variety. However, they are also less reliable and don't always carry a guarantee. There are basically three types of disk, single-sided double density, double-sided double density and double-sided high density, which can come in either 3.5-inch or 5.25-inch sizes. Amstrad use a special 3-inch double_sided disk for their CPC and +3 range of computers but this is not a standard adopted by any manufacturer (indeed, Amstrad themselves are phasing it out).

Each of the different types of disk are certified to hold certain amounts of data. A double-sided disk can hold more information than a single-sided disk while high density disks can hold more information than double density disks. Sometimes a computer can be fooled into thinking that a single-sided disk is really a double-sided disk or double density disk is high density.

There's a danger here that you will try to fit too much information on a disk and end up corrupting it. Always treat a disk according to its label, regardless of whether the computer overestimates its storage capacity. The Amiga and ST commonly use 3.5-inch DS/DD disks while the C64 and PCs generally use 5.25-inch DS/DD disks. If your local computer shop doesn't supply blank disks try Manor Court Supplies. They can supply 20x3.5-inch DS/DD with a disk box for £20 and 25x5.25-inch DS/DD with disk box for £11.62. CPC and Spectrum +3 owners can get disks direct from Maxell, or most major independents.

MIDI extras

Anyone who read the Introduction to MIDI article in issue 23 will be aware that you need a MIDI Thru box if you want to connect your MIDI equipment in a Star Network. The advantages of connecting your instruments in this manner is that it by passes any time lag problems produced by devices that are slow in sending MIDI information out through the Thru port and helps keep your MIDI leads tidy. MIDI Music distribute the entire range of Philip Rees Technology MIDI Thru boxes priced from £12.95 upwards, depending on the number of ports available. The most basic unit, the V3, features one MIDI In port and three MIDI Outs, while the top of the range V10 offers one MIDI In and ten Outs.

While old analogue synths don't offer the same flexibility as digital devices, with their built-in MIDI ports, their sounds have always been popular and they can be bought for relatively low prices. The distinctive acid house sound was built entirely around old Roland analogue sounds (the TR808 drum machine, SH101 monophonic synth and TB303 Bassline). Philip Rees' MCV allows you to connect all your non-MIDI synths to MIDI devices.

Mouse mats

Finding a surface which works well with the mouse is not always easy, so save yourself the bother and go and buy a mouse mat. Treble H Computing sell a soft mouse mat for £4.50.





Bitcon Devices Limited: 88 Beswick Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 1RS. Tel: (091) 490 1975.

Cheetah Marketing Ltd: Norbury House, Norbury Road, Fairwater, Cardiff CF5 3AS. Tel: (0222) 55525.

Commodore Business Machines: Commodore House, The Switchback, Gardner Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7XA. Tel: (0628) 770088.

Datel Electronics Ltd: Fenton Industrial Estate, Govan Road, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent. Tel: (0782) 744707.

Evesham Micros Ltd: 63 Bridge Street, Evesham, Worcester WR11 4SF. Tel: (0386) 76550.

Manor Court Supplies: Glencelyn House, Penybont, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5SY. Tel: (0597) 87894.

MIDI Music: 25 MIddleleaze Drive, West Swindon SN5 9LG. Tel (0793) 882108.

Miles Gordon Technology: Lakeside, Phoenix Way, Swansea SA7 9EH. Tel: (0792) 791100.

Mills Associates Ltd: Chewton Street, Eastwood, Nottingham NG16 3HB. Tel: (0773) 761426.

PC Engine Services: Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ. Tel: (01) 735 5998.

PowerPlay Ltd: Slackcote Lane, Delph, Oldham OL3 5TW. Tel: (04577) 6601.

Romantic Robot: 54 Deanscroft Ave, London NW9 8EN. Tel: (01) 200 8870

Rombo Productions: 6 Fairbairn Road, Kirkton North, Livingston, Scotland EH54 6TS. Tel: (0506) 414631.

Treble H Computing: Cromer House, Caxton, Stevenage, Herts. SG1 2DF. Tel: (0438) 361738.

Trilogic: Unit 1, 253 New Works Road, Bradford BD12 0QP. Tel: 0274 678062.

DON'T FORGET TO MENTION, YOU SAW IT IN TGM.



TOOLBOX ■ Life in the hard lane

COMMUNICATIONS

Hanging on the telephone

Prestel have recently launched The ChessBox Club as an alternative to conventional postal chess. All moves will transmitted using Prestel's electronic messaging service, ensuring that lengthy delays are avoided. The club offers three main services: ChessMatch, ChessMate and ChessMoves.

ChessMatch organises an annual tournament which will commence in January 1990. It's closely linked to the British Chess Federation.

ChessMate puts fellow club members in contact with each other for the purpose of playing non-competive chess games.

Finally, ChessMoves provides all the latest information from the chess world, such as results from World Championships as well as reviews of chess-related products.

Club members will also receive a quarterly newsletter. Subscriptions to Prestel currently cost £8 per quarter. Access to the system is then charged at 7p per minute, between 8am-6pm Monday to Saturday, and 1p per minute at all other times. Telephone costs are charged at local call rates.

For further information, telephone Prestel free of charge on (0800) 200 700.

ATARI ST ■ AMIGA

Linguistic launches

The Amiga conversion of STOS is now rescheduled to be launched in January 1990. Mandarin Software say that the delay has been caused by a combination of technical problems, while several new features have also been included at the request of Amiga users.

AMOS (£49.95) is a complete new programming language which greatly reduces the amount of work needed to create quality programs. It can accept IFF files and Deluxe Paint brushes, grab music and sprites from commercial games, and comes complete with three games, as well as several 'bare bones' games to demonstrate some of the techniques required to create different types of games.

Just like STOS, the release of AMOS will be followed by the release of several supplementary packages designed to enhance different aspects of the program. A sprites disk will contain over 1000 additional graphics, including spaceships, monsters, cars etc. While a 3-D package is being being developed to help AMOS users create 3-D environments in the style of Starglider 2.

If you can't wait till January to see just what AMOS is capable of, Mandarin are offering demo disks for £2, this will also include a £2 voucher redeemable against any AMOS package released by Mandarin.

STOS owners can also get their hands on two new additions to the range. STOS Musician (£14.95) is a score writing program that lets STOS owners write their own music using traditional music notation. MIDI facilities allow STOS users to input music from a MIDI device and then edit it on screen. Alternatively music can be output to a MIDI device, as in the Sierra games. The package also includes 100 ready-made jingles and tunes.

The other package, Games Galore (£19.95), contains four of the best games entered in the STOS Gameswriter of the Year awards. STOS users can grab any of the games' music or sprites or examine how the games were programmed and possibly learn a few new techniques.

MANDARIN SOFTWARE: Europa House, Adlington Park, Adlington, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. Tel: (0625) 878888.

PC

Fantastic fonts

Having just released the enhanced version of Deluxe Paint II (£99.95), Electronic Arts have also announced a companion product for the art utility. Kara Fonts (£49.95) features nine new eight-colour fonts which can be rescaled up to nine times their original size when used with Deluxe Paint II's poster program.

ELECTRONIC ARTS: Langley Business Centre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Near Slough, Berkshire SL3 8YN. Tel: (0753) 49442.

ATARI ST ■ AMIGA

Sampled delights

Microdeal have announced more details on their new range of samplers.

Replay Professional (£129.95) is the top-of-the-range sampler in the Replay family of samplers. The package includes a hardware cartridge, which allows four channels of sound to be played simultaneously, as well as three software programs. The sample editor is used in conjunction with the hardware to actually record the sample. You can sample at rates ranging from 4 to 48Khz. There are various editing commands to help you whittle your sample down to exactly what you want to hear. There's also an effects menu which allows you to drastically alter the sound of your sample by adding echo, reverb or flange. MIDI options also allow you to play the sample on your MIDI keyboard.

The second program, Drumbeat Professional, is a sequencing package which allows you to arrange your samples into a songs. If you're familiar with drum notation grids you'll feel immediately at home with this program. If you're new to sequencing, you'll find drum grids one of the easier methods of arranging your songs. Up to four samples can be played at any one time with a maximum of 15 samples held in memory. MIDI has also been implemented.

The final program is designed to be used in conjunction with a MIDI keyboard. You can assign various key splits to your keyboard so that different keys trigger different samples. It also allows you to loop samples so that you can sustain a sound for a long time, even if your sample is quite short.

Quartet (£49.95) is a sample player package. You can import samples from most popular samplers, including the Replay range, and compose music on four scrolling staves. The package comes complete with a large selection of sampled musical instruments and MIDI options which allow you to record sequences from a MIDI keyboard and playback using Quartet's instrument samples.

For a full explanation of sampling terms read next month's ESSENTIAL TGM Guide to Sampling.

MICRODEAL: PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwell PL25 4YB. Tel: (0726) 69692..

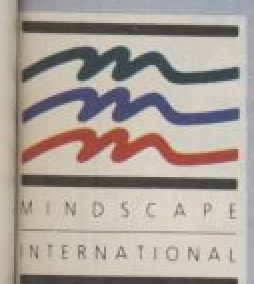
WORD PROCESSING ■ COMMUNICATIONS

Budget packages

Kuma have extended their 'Better English at a Better Price' promotion on the K-Roget thesaurus till the end of December. The package includes a database of over 150,000 words and phrases and works in conjunction with most popular word processors. Versions for the ST, Amiga and PC-compatibles are available at the special price of £29.95.

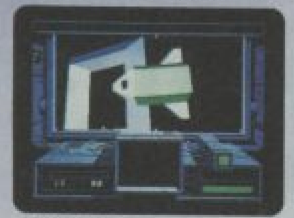
Kuma have also added a communications package to their growing K range of applications. Initially available for the Amiga only, K-Comm 2 (£29.95) offers baud rates from 75 to 9600, access to viewdata services such as Prestel, auto-dialling, programmable function keys, a software link to Psion Organiser hand-helds and an onscreen help facility.

KUMA COMPUTERS LTD: 12 Horseshoe Park, Pangbourne, Berkshire RG8 7JW. Tel: (0734) 844335.

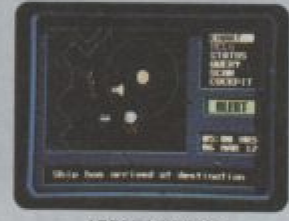


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Design floors

More ramblings from that software industry guru, the one and only (thank God) Zog. This month he (or is it she?) looks at, well, perhaps Zog'd better explain...

This article is dedicated to those unsung heroes who invented such things as electronic tills which beep loudly after being open for more than a few seconds, toasters with just two settings ('slightly warm' and 'charcoal') and doorbells that play a random tune selected from such favourites as The Sound of Music. It is about the problems I face when taking on entire enemy empires single-handedly. It is also about something called ergonomics. That is, the interface between the controls of a piece of equipment (or a game), and the operator of the controls (usually vaguely human).

The simple consideration of the fact that someone actually has to use a piece of machinery or play a computer game all seems so simple and obvious, but this is usually with 20/20 hindsight. Perhaps, also, it is because you and I are more likely to be Users and not Designers, and thus notice these things since we actually use them 'in the field', as it were.

For example, I have just had a go at a game of... well, the program requested complete privacy, and I have no wish to be the first person sued for libel by a computer game, so I'll just call it Malcolm instead. It is, actually, a game called Stellar Crusade, but I shouldn't tell you that, of course. Someone may talk and give the whole game away (if only they would).

You may not have heard of Malcolm, let alone played it, but it is basically a strategy game in which you try to dominate the known universe. I have played it all the way through and a few part games (especially the first few moves), but as I ploughed through it I began to look at the way that the screens were laid out. It was as if a whole group of programmers had been given the same set of rules and each given a screen to design. The basic format of each ended up roughly the same, but on each screen, for example, the Exit button was in a radically different place.

Since there were several layers of screens, moving from one function to another might well involve selecting Exit four times in a row before you could select anew... Result: several steps of 'wait for the program to draw the new screen' followed by 'move the cursor to the next Exit box and press left mouse button'.

This is just one case that is niggling me at the moment whilst I attempt once again to dominate the galaxy. Maybe you have your own examples.

Ergonomics is part of the design process, a way of taking one or more components which have reached their optimum design, in terms of cost, marketability, reliability or whatever, and then looking at the package from outside. If it is to be a machine which will be used by a person at ground level, ergonomics would suggest that the controls are at a height of about four or five feet above the ground. The designer may have ended up with controls at the very top, or the base, but it is only when someone considers that for any sustained operation the controls are going to have to be readily accessible (especially the OFF button!) that ergonomic ideals come into play.

Again, a compromise may have to be made between convenience and cost. Consider Los Angeles, for example. They spent millions of dollars extra on the design of a 'kneeling bus', which could hydraulically lower down at the front so that physically handicapped passengers could get on and off. It was only after they had hundreds chugging around that someone pointed out that they could have saved loadsamoney by buying bog-standard buses and providing a free taxi service to those handicapped that currently used the bus network...

Still, back to the world of games. Millions of mouse clicks of effort to become Ruler of the Cosmos or whatever is just too tedious for most people. Somehow, the thing could be tidied up a bit, streamlined, optimised or just basically massaged until it is slick. Good programs have an economy of effort with them, a sense of style. They should also have a variety of ways to achieve the same objective, from a simple and self-explanatory (but slow) method, to a high-speed expert method (for advanced users who know what they are doing). This is always a problem for those programs that use layers of menus; ie, menus within menus.

As I mentioned with Malcolm earlier, it is a pity that there were no short cuts for getting right out of a function to go elsewhere with just one click — and that, having done so, a short cut for getting right back to where you were previously. Perhaps a better idea is one of those games where you can select several thingies, which present you with controls or information out of a range of possible ones. Depending upon what you are doing at the moment, you can choose which few vital screens you wish displayed at any time, perhaps in the form of windows which can also be repositioned as required.

Still, not to worry. I was playing Populous the other day, and looking for the Evil leader because I was in BIG trouble. As a god, my worshippers were getting a good working over, and I needed to find him fast. Just as he appeared onscreen, my mouse hand must have moved slightly, because instead of moving one space further the pointer had moved and I selected Earthquake instead. With water being fatal, I caught the guy unawares and promptly drowned about 30% of his population! So, just because the buttons are too close together or pulling a lever requires a one metre high dwarf (is this a case of ergo-gnomics?) to operate it effectively doesn't always mean that you can expect the worst — but somebody might be tempted to make a better one...

INFORMATION DESK

The Centre Bytes team are back from the pub after a quick lemonade or something to answer more of your computing queries... then they're off to Woolies to check out the new CDs

Sights on sounds

I own a C64, a MIDI interface, a Yamaha PSS480 keyboard and a disk drive. The keyboard has got MIDI ports but it's not multi-timbral. Can you recommend a suitable sound module, bearing in mind that I only have a budget of £300? Also, are there any good sequencers available for the C64?
G Jones, London.

A secondhand Yamaha TX81Z or Roland MT32 are perhaps the best buys in your budget range. Both contain some good sounds and the MT32 also features the added bonus of a percussion section. However, you'll need to buy some voice-editing software for the MT32 if you want to customise the built-in sounds. An article on voice editors is planned for a future issue of TGM but there aren't many available for the C64.

While the ST and Amiga tend to dominate the music scene there are a number of quality packages available for the C64. Steinberg's Pro 16 (distributed in the UK by Evenlode Soundworks) is used by a number of groups, such as Bomb The Bass, and should cope with most sequencing needs.

Evenlode Soundworks: The Studio, Church Street, Stonesfield, Oxford OX7 2PS. Tel: (099389) 8484.

Where do I start?

I was thinking of starting a fanzine and there are a few things I would really like to know...
1) Where should I advertise it?
2) How should I go about taking screenshots? When I use a flash on my camera nothing comes out. But when I don't use it hardly anything shows on the photographs?
3) If I send software houses a sample issue of the fanzine will that be enough to convince them to send review copies of software?
Leigh Loveday, Port Talbot

1) You could start by advertising in TGM's Classified section.
2) Firstly, the picture must be taken in a darkened room and without a flash. You will need to take a light reading from the TV screen with a light meter. This will tell you what F-stop to set the camera at (it should be around 5.6). Then set the camera exposure between 1/8 and 1/4 second. The long exposure time is to counteract the television roll-bar effect and produce a smooth picture. Try and pause the game before taking a picture, otherwise you'll end up with a blurred image.

This should produce a picture but experiment with your camera settings to find out what's best. If your camera is one of those totally automatic ones where you don't have to set anything before taking a picture, then there isn't much you can do to get a good photo except fiddle with the brightness and contrast on your TV.
3) Don't expect much software support. Most software houses view fanzines skeptically. After all, anyone could set up a fanzine just for the sole purpose of obtaining free software (perish the thought). Most software houses will want to see several issues of your fanzine before giving out any free software.

Dragon's where?

I think that Amiga version of Dragon's Lair is great but I desperately want to get hold of the original arcade machine. Could you please tell me how much one would cost and where I could get one from?
E Buckley, Coalville

Dragon's Lair is getting on a bit now so you should be able to buy one for about £300-400. Whatever arcade or fruit machine you're after the best place to look is Coin Slot magazine.

And just to prove that us on Infodesk keep up with the games scene, the follow-up to Dragon's Lair — Space Ace (ST and Amiga) — should be out very soon. From what we've seen, Readysoft have done a marvellous job, combining some stunning cartoon graphics with some even better speech. Entertainment International will be distributing it over here. We also here that Readysoft are finishing off an ST version of Dragon's Lair.

COIN SLOT: 2 Daltry Street, Oldham, Lancs. Tel: (061) 6243687.

ENTERTAINMENT INTERNATIONAL: 4 The Stannetts, Laindon North Trade Centre, Basildon, Essex SS15 6DJ. Tel: (0268) 541126.

Befuddled by baubles? Worried by the Wizard of Oz? Tickled by tinsel? Aggravated by Auntie? Mindless on Martini? Nobbled by nuts? Send all your Christmas and computing problems to: Information Desk, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Unfortunately, we can't enter into personal correspondence, so don't send any SAEs, please — unless your name is Robin Hogg, in which case we'll send some shapely photos to the ZZAP! office.

Is it worth it?

I've been using Deluxe Paint ever since I bought my Amiga over two years ago. I would really like to upgrade to Deluxe Paint III but I know this needs 1Mb RAM to run properly. What I'd like to know is do you really think it's worth the money (about £170 for both)?
David Tolley, Mexborough

As you already own Deluxe Paint, you can purchase Deluxe Paint III at a reduced price direct from Electronic Arts. Just send in some proof of purchase, such as a page from the manual or the registration card, and you can buy Deluxe Paint III for £55. RAM expansions cost as little as £69.99 (see the Christmas Gifts article on page 35). So that's already brought the total price down to £124.95. Deluxe Paint III was reviewed in TGM 018. The program is excellent and as you're already used to Deluxe Paint you'll find it very easy to use. If you're really keen on computer art then it's certainly worth the money and remember the RAM expansion will also come in useful for other applications and games.

ELECTRONIC ARTS: Langley Business Centre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Near Slough, Berkshire SL3 8YN. Tel: (0753) 49442.

Conversion capers

1) Will Typhoon Thompson ever be converted to another format?
2) How about Shadow of the Beast, will that ever appear on another computer?
Mark Suttard, Manchester

1) The latest Domark catalogue reveals that Typhoon Thompson will be available on the Amiga in January 1990.
2) Shadow of the Beast is being converted to both the PC and ST. The ST version should be out by the time you read this, while the PC version is scheduled for release sometime in the New Year.




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Moving with the times

Animation is one of the areas that Centre Bytes intends to cover more deeply in a future issue, with a full explanation of techniques and tips for the beginner. In the meantime, Robin Candy looks at a new UK release of an old US animation package for the Amiga, from Broderbund and imported into this country by Domark it is Fantavision...

Anyone can create stunning animations. All you need is a good set of artistic skills and plenty of patience. Unfortunately, most of us don't possess either of these prerequisites so we need the computer to lend us a helping hand.

The Amiga market is already saturated with art packages, so the latest crop of releases have also featured some sort of animation commands, to add an extra dimension to your artistic accomplishments. Fantavision, however, is dedicated to animation only and to get the most from it really needs to be used in conjunction with another art utility.

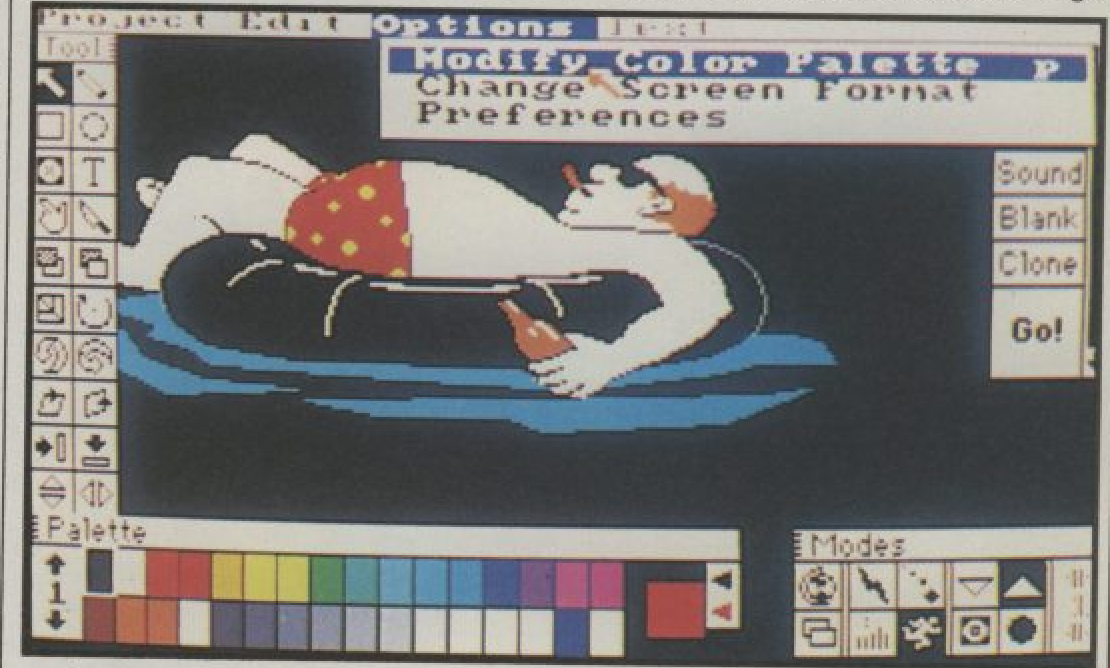
Picture this!

An object is created in terms of points. You can't just draw on the screen freehand as in an art utility. You create an object by specifying a series of points on the screen, which are then linked together, just like a dot-to-dot picture. The number of points per object is restricted by memory only, so you can create some very complex shapes. Circle and rectangle commands are also available to ease the process.

Once an object has been created it can be filled with a colour to create a silhouette. But what if you want to create a detailed object, such as a spaceship? You first define the general shape of your ship using your first object, then add the detail using other objects. So the end result would be a collage of a variety of objects. This seems to be a long-winded process but it does allow for more flexibility should you want to animate the different parts of the ship.

The number of objects onscreen is also only limited by memory. If you find yourself running out of objects then several can be combined together to form one object; this is known as a bitmap.

Fantavision also allows you to import graphics (via IFF) from another art utility as bitmaps. This is particularly useful if you don't like the dot-to-dot method of creating objects. These bitmaps can also be used as static backgrounds behind your animations (as in the prehistoric picture on this page). However, once a bitmap has been created its content cannot be altered in anyway.



Animation is created by forming a series of frames (which are, in reality, a series of pictures). These frames differ only slightly from each other. In the first frame a man may be at one end of the screen, then in the next screen the figure maybe in a slightly different position. By creating a number of frames and then flicking between them rapidly, the figure appears to walk across the screen.

A complex animation can take a considerable amount of time to produce if you have to draw each frame separately. Fortunately the computer can do much of the work for you.

Fantavision creates animations using objects and a technique known as tweening. Basically you create a series of frames using your objects and the computer works out additional animation frames for you. So you could draw a circle at one of the screen as one frame and then draw it again at the other side of the screen in the next frame. When the animation is run, the computer creates a number of in-between frames so that the circle appears to move across the screen relatively smoothly. Admittedly, this feature has been included on other animation packages, but Fantavision takes it a step further.

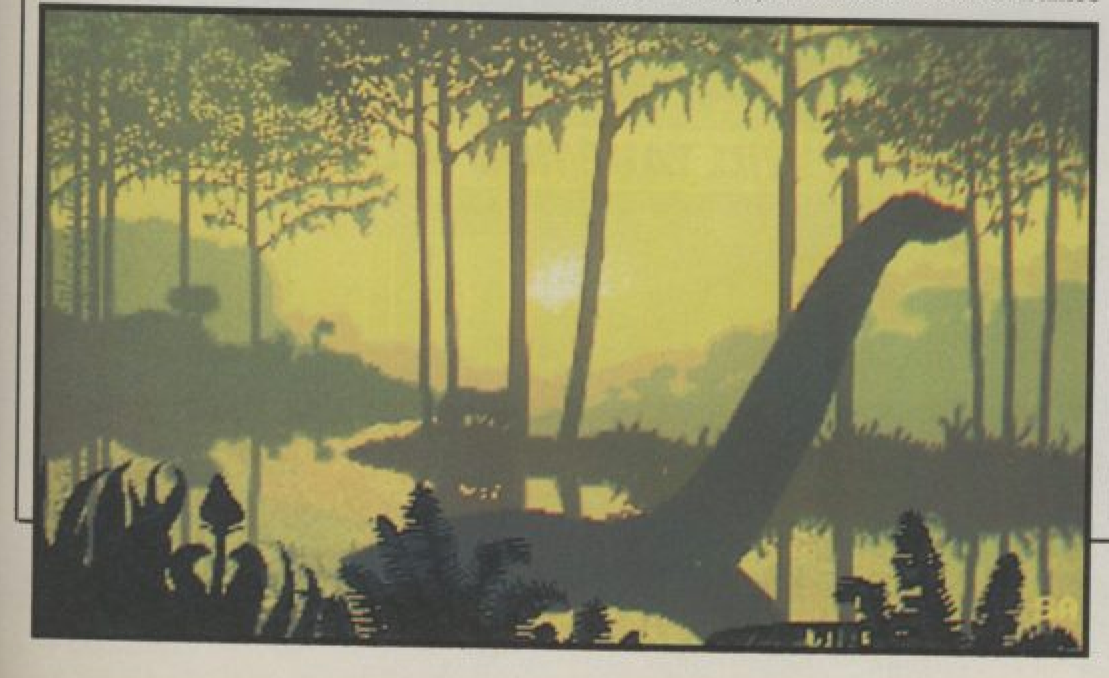
For instance, you could draw a triangle in the top right-hand corner of the screen on one frame then draw a circle in the bottom left-hand corner of the second frame; and when the animation is run, the triangle will appear to move diagonally down the screen while changing into a circle. Of course, if you use this with several objects the results can be breathtaking. Imagine a detailed picture of a person changing into an animal; creating effects like this isn't too difficult with this package. The number of tweens that appear between each frame is user-definable and restricted only by available memory.

Fantavision can also play IFF sound samples on any frame, so you can introduce sound effects into your animations.

This is only a brief tour covering the main aspects of what is an excellent program. Fantavision also includes a whole host of additional commands (such as block manipulation options) to improve the quality of your animations.

Fantavision really does make animation easy. Most other animation packages tend to get bogged down in jargon and feature complex options which only produce rudimentary animation. Not so Fantavision, only a quick skim through the manual is necessary before you can start creating your own animations. Options have been kept to minimum yet they're capable of producing dazzling effects, if only all programs were as user-friendly as this one!

DOMARK: Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, Putney, London SW15. Tel: (01) 780 2224.



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AMIGA - ST £9.95

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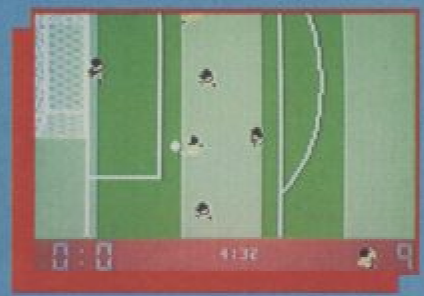
* CVG - 88% - Most playable soccer simulation in binary history. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
* ZZAP - 96% - So Realistic, So Fun, Soooo Addictive. Boots all other football simulations over the crossbar.
* AMIGA FORMAT - GOLD - 91% - The best football game on the Amiga to date.
* THE ONE - 88% - The game is such a joy to play. By far the best to appear on 16 bit.
* POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - 94% - The opposition gets blown away by the utter brilliance of KICK OFF, which has the proper options and the best gameplay seen in any football game.
* THE ACE - A great football game that will have you queuing up for a season ticket.
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* THE GAMES MACHINE - 87% - Best 16 bit soccer simulator yet. True football skills are needed in every sense of the word.
* ST USER - The whole game is a complete delight to play and immediately addictive. This is one of the fastest and most exiting action games around and it just has to be the best football simulation yet.

PLAYING IT IS EASY - MASTERING IT WILL TAKE TIME - A LOT OF TIME



AMIGA

ATARI ST



CBM 64



ANCO SOFTWARE LTD., UNIT 10, BURNHAM TRADING ESTATE, LAWSON ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT. Mail Order by Cheque, Postal Order, ACCESS or VISA.
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A COMMODORE CHRISTMAS

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania brings one thing to the mind of every American patriot: The World of Commodore Show (well, it does to Marshal M Rosenthal). Many call it the Silicon Valley of the east, due to the number of software companies situated there. The last bastion of the Commodore 64 also hosts the latest Amiga goodies. Our man in the States investigates...

There's some 1,000 fans — many of them young — all of them eager to see what's new, and get their hands on anything vaguely resembling a joystick. Scanning the 50+ booths with a practised eye, I note that games seem to be what's happening. So, let's take a closer look...

Innerprise's Battle Squadron (reviewed this issue) doesn't prepare you for their Persian Gulf Inferno (Amiga). Here you play a Commando who must takeover an oil rig from a group of evil terrorists. Moving through the levels of the rig, you must also locate the scientist held captive. Only he can deactivate the nuclear weapon concealed somewhere else on the premises. Arcade-like, the figure you control moves in all directions; up and down ladders, and performing the odd forward roll before rising up to fire his weapon. Obtaining this weapon is of paramount importance, as the terrorists soon pounce, letting off screams of anger, along with the obligatory butt-blaster.

Hours of fun can be had with Britannica Software's Jigsaw. Load in any IFF format picture, press a key, then have hours of fun unravelling the picture

Wrestling the joystick from the masses, I see that you begin with two charges (used to blow locked doors) and a loaded handgun with (only) two clips. Finding more ammo is vital, and it certainly helps when you get hold of a shotgun. Other goodies include an elevator card, eliminating the tedious climbing between levels of the rig.

Graphics are small, which is good since you can see splats of blood appear on the targets you hit (no censorship on games here, either). Of course the same applies for you. This is not a game of diplomacy or heavy strategy. Mostly it's about moving fast (the bomb explodes within two hours of real time) and getting rid of anything in the way. Sound effects are gruesomely accurate, and the pitter-patter of little feet (carrying big guns) can be heard over your own footsteps.

Speaking of little feet, Sierra's Space Quest 3 (Amiga) is due any moment for the Amiga. Those (little?) guys from Andromeda are now in a terrible fix: they've been kidnapped and must write horrible software. Only Roger Wilco (with a bit if help from you and the mouse) can save them. Great graphics are combined with ultra-neat sound effects. Plus a somewhat offbeat sense of humour.

Doing it the C64 hard way

New C64 hardware is very scarce but the World of Commodore is where you can find it. First up is the improved JiffyDOS. This consists of replacement ROM chips for the 64, as well as the standard 1571 disk drive. Once installed, a series of special commands now become available. These include disk formatting, directory listing to screen or printer, screen dumps and more. Overall speed of the system is increased, and JiffyDOS even corrects bugs in Commodore's operating system. Installation is relatively simple and requires no soldering (but do take care as this will void existing warranties). There's even a built-in file copier.

'Sound effects [in Persian Gulf] are gruesomely accurate, and the pitter-patter of little feet (carrying big guns) can be heard over your own footsteps'



Just when you thought the C64 had lost all support, along comes the World of Commodore Show. Shown above is RAMlink — more commands and more memory



KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD

It usually takes ages for American products to find a distributor over here, if ever, so it's often worth sending off directly to America for the latest computer goodies. Issue 22 (page 73) contained a guideline to ordering goods from America, please read it before sending off any money.

**Free Spirit Software
PO Box 128/58 Noble Street, Kutztown, Pennsylvania 19530.
Ami/Sex Vixens from Space/Planet of Lust/Bride of the Robot (Amiga)**

Busy Bee Software
PO Box 2959, Lompoc, California 93438.
BB Talker 64 (C64/128)

**Innerprise (UK distributor, Electronic Zoo, available through usual UK outlets).
The Persian Gulf Inferno (Amiga)**

Berkeley Softworks
2150 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704.
GEOS 2.0 (C64)

**Creative Micro Designs Inc
50 Industrial Drive, PO Box 646, East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028.
HD series drives/JiffyDOS/RAMlink (C64)**

Britannica Software
PO Box 77186, San Francisco, California 94107.
Jigsaw (Amiga)

**Future Touch
192 Laurel Road, East Northport, New York, New York 11731.
Touch Screen (Amiga)**

Michtron
576 S Telegraph, Pontiac, Michigan 48053.
Viva (Amiga)

**Beeshu Inc.
101 Wilton Avenue, Middlesex, New Jersey 08846
Zoomer (Amiga)**

RAMlink is a hardware interface which plugs into the C64 cartridge port and allows for easy memory expansion. It includes the JiffyDOS kernal ROM, has a through-port for a second cartridge and its own power supply. RAMlink's DOS powers up immediately and supports all Commodore DOS commands. A credible 90% compatibility with software is claimed.

On the software end, also for the 64, is the improved GeoDesk v2.0. WIMP (Window, Icon, Mouse, Pulldown menus) facilities are now totally built into the host environment, with all the window facilities of higher-end machines. Special programs developed for the system include GeoPaint, a high-resolution graphics editor, GeoSpell and GeoChart for the making graphs. The C128 is well-catered for, with extra power on most commands.

Say what you mean

Also being shown is Busy Bee's Talker 64. This is a talking version of their Write Stuff word processing program, using the SAM (Software Automated Mouth) program made popular on the 8-bit Atari many years ago. Nine user-definable voices combine with help menus. Written originally for educators and the handicapped, its features make it valuable to everyone.

How about a hard drive for that 64? Creative's HD series use 3.5-inch technology and connects through the 64's serial bus. Available with 20 or 40 megabytes, other SCSI devices will connect as well. It's also possible to take the drive with you should you decide to upgrade. JiffyDOS improves performance, as does hooking the drive through RAMlink. The hard drive operating system is stored in ROM for quicker access, and comes with a set of tools that enable up to 16 partitions, directories and sub directories. Special



Hundreds of new games were on show at the latest American gathering of Commodore groupies. Shown above is Roger Wilco's latest adventure in Sierra's Space Quest 3



Just what you need when popping down to your local Victoria Wine. Viva, based on the Mac's HyperCard system, works on any Amiga with at least one megabyte — and comes complete with a free Wine List Guide to help you through the troubling Christmas period

operating modes are built-in for compatibility with GEOS and CP/M.

Of course you'd expect hardware for the Amiga to be pretty astounding, and Viva won't disappoint you. It's a hyperware product which allows massive data storage of all sorts of information to be accessed in a random (ie, direct) way. Mac users have had HyperCard for some time now, but they don't get colour and sound like us Amiga owners do! Building stacks is easy and totally icon-driven. Where it gets nifty is in interfacing the program with a laser player (done via a special connector). Viva will play-only on a one-meg system, but requires some three megabytes to properly be used for creating programs. Check out the included Wine List Guide, by the way. Great sound effects and lots of appropriate pictures (too bad some of the listings are beyond TGM budgets).

Even more amazing is Future Touch's Touch Screen. Use it with Viva, or alter the included software to work with other programs. A special screen is placed inside the monitor case and in front of the picture tube. This screen is then touch sensitive, and responds to your finger as if moved around by a mouse. Professional applications abound; choosing music videos in shops, shopping mall information, etc. It really makes the Amiga a neat machine. It's far from cheap (around £650), but you can buy it already inside an RGB monitor which helps to keep the pain of the price down.

On the arcade end, try Dr Plummet's House of Flux (MicroIllusions), a game billed as being of low gravity and high sarcasm. It's basically spawned from Asteroids (a space ship), Lunar Lander (gravity effects pulling at you) and a maze game. 28 bizarre and humorous screens are spread over four selectable missions: full of fighting aliens and the twisted, unpredictable forces of Dr Plummet's fortress.

The box calls Jigsaw the 'ultimate electronic puzzle'. Hype notwithstanding, there's a lot of fun to be had using this one- or two-player program to mix up IFF pictures. Any low-res picture, with up to 32-colours, can be used. The program then jumbles up the picture according to your choice of complication. This ranges from as few as four pieces to over 200 (try and sort that one out!). The mouse is placed over the piece to move and a click sends that particular panel to the blank spot. A difficulty level can both scramble and rotate the pieces, which makes it VERY hard. Meanwhile, a timer is counting down...

Jigsaw includes built-in help screens, and a percentage chart that shows how well you are doing. The program will also print out the screen at any time.

Sick disks?

Free Spirit's Ami is a useful Amiga alignment utility of value to everyone who has wondered just what is going on in that floppy drive when it chomps away on disks. Four functions make up the heart of the program — with everything taking place on one master screen. The test sections include an automatic alignment function which checks the various tracks, and a drive motor speed option for determining the actual r.p.m. and condition of the disk in relationship to the drive. Not copy protected, Ami can be installed on hard disk and comes with a specially calibrated disk to use for comparisons.

Also from Free Spirit comes their trilogy of adult-rated (sort of) text interactive games featuring mature themes. It stars Captain Brad Stallion in such titles as Sex Vixens from Space and Planet of Lust. The latest to come is Bridge of the Robot — in which you must save Miss Galaxy from a sex-mad robot. Each features an interactive mouse-driven icon bar at the bottom of the screen, which is also where you type in commands. The main screen displays the view at hand (sorry, no digitised stuff, just 32-colour low-res graphics). It's all a bit naughty, but not terribly so. Music adds to the fun, plus the pointer icon is a very cute little hand that tosses in a few visual comments of its own now and then.

Okay, we've had enough. Wrapping our purchases inside of a large Leisure Suit Larry beach towel, we head out, back to the elevator and up to the restaurant. Amiga or not, you GOTTA eat sometime! ❄

TINTIN ON THE MOON

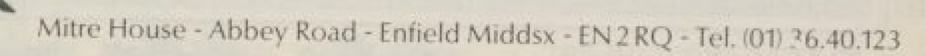
Hello, Hello.... This is Earth calling Moon Rocket.... Hello, Hello.....

Hello, Hello, This is Earth... Calling Moon Rocket.... Calling Moon Rocket....

Thunder! I hope nothing has happened to them!....

"Hello control station! Here is the moon rocket. Tintin speaking. I have just regained conciousness. Everything seems OK, we are now taking over the controls of the rocket."
Aboard the rocket, you will relive with Tintin and his friends the most exciting adventure the world has ever known. The first trip to the Moon!
Will you succeed in piloting the red and white rocket through space and achieve a flawless landing? Will you capture Colonel Boris, the traitor, who wants to make the expedition fail? Will you be able to find the extinguishers to put out the fires, even while floating in zero-gravity (which ins't everybody's idea of fun)? Will you succeed in finding and disarming the bombs and freeing your companions in order to get out of the rocket to make the first step on the Moon? You will discover all this by playing "TINTIN ON THE MOON", the first computer game based on the comic books by Hergé...
Before Armstrong there was Tintin and... may be you!





INFOGRAMES

Mitre House - Abbey Road - Enfield Middsx - EN2 RQ - Tel. (01) 36.40.123

READERPAGE

Porn or TGM?

Dear TGM
An increasingly common and disturbing occurance has compelled me to write. In the desperate hope that action may be taken by those in a position of power to rectify this most serious and diabolical (yes, DIABOLICAL) situation.

I am, of course, referring to the bane of many an innocent computer enthusiast. The wicked (nay, cruel) placement of our beloved computer mags directly adjacent to publications of a pornographic nature.

Whilst gazing toward the upper shelves seeking my favourite publication *[that's TGM we presume?]*, my hands and eyes may waver precariously in the vicinity of that devil's work referred to above.

Naturally, if I find that TGM is not yet released I depart empty-handed, leaving the obligatory female assistant (along with others present) no doubt thinking that I have lost my nerve at the last moment by not diving for the porno stuff.

Whilst I do not wish to be acknowledged as a rampant pervert, I am sure many such characters feel a similar repugnance to the prospect of being branded a computer gaming enthusiast when their eyes inadvertently stray to such nether regions.

Of course, the solution to this problem is within our very grasps (NB: I have more than one grasp) should newsagents globally ignore my plea. The cure is, of course, worldwide uniliteral TGM subscription NOW. (Or Wibbly Bits Monthly (WBM) depending upon personal preference.)
MA Bingham, Bakersfield

Thing is, though, who should get placed next to the porno stuff? Your Sinclair, perhaps.

Death to Xenites!

Dear TGM
On Wednesday the 11th of October, at precisely 5:30pm, my house was finally at rest. I nervously moved towards the computer to insert the fatal disk. This time, there were to be no interruptions, this time the Xenites were going to die.

As it turned out, everything went exactly to plan. I even had four lives by the time I came to the last end-of-level guardian. I was cool, confident and collected. Billy Joel's latest song blared loudly in the background and the final confrontation began.

It was a piece of cake. He had no defence against three lasers, bullets that were bigger than my ship, two shields and enough power-ups to supply the national grid. In fact, my armoury was so big I even felt sorry for him.

Well, the reason I wrote in is that I wanted to know if I am the first person to finish Xenon 2. If not, how many came before me. All I ask is for anyone who has finished it to write to the address below. To prove they have finished it, could they send a quick summary of what happens at the end.

Just one more thing, in answer to the question at the end, I can say that the game was most definitely good enough.
Jonathan Khan, 27 St Catherine's Road, Broxbourne, Herts EN10 7LD.

Listening to Billy Joel while playing seems to do the trick for us, too. However, thoughts such as 'I even felt sorry for him' will do you no good in games like Shadow of the Beast or Armalyte.

My dad won't let me!!!

Dear TGM
I would like an Amiga 500 for Christmas, but my dad says no, for the obvious reason — they're too dear. So, I said I would save up £150 and pay some towards it, but still no. Then he said I had a budget of £150, so I mentioned the PC Engine and Sega Mega Drive. I think the problem with these computers is that the games are too dear. But then he thinks that these computers will get swamped with software, like the old Ataris did a few years ago, and that computers and software prices will go down shortly. If Amigas go down in price for next Christmas, I could get one. What do you think? (I own a Commodore Plus/4.)
Liam Campling, London
PS: If I win send me Amiga games, please.
PPS: My dad thinks I should get a C64.

Well, we'd all love an Amiga, but sometimes we have to make do with what we can afford. If your budget's only £150, then you're severely limiting yourself to old stock. Although some PC Engines are available for sub-£150, we'd be very cautious before recommending such cut-price deals. Best to buy one through an independent if you can afford the software. The Sega Mega Drive is to be released officially by Virgin Mastertronic in summer '90, so we'd wait till then to buy any Sega machine (software prices may also stabilise then). C64s, although good in their day, are a bit dated now — and software is definitely drying up. Not recommended.

Bit difficult to know what to say, really. How about saving up a bit more money (sell the bike, CD player, cat, etc) and getting an Amiga in the middle of next year when they'll either drop in price or, more likely, be part of a better bundle. If you can wait till next Christmas then do so.

TGM, you're nicked

Dear TGM
What gives, you gave the Spectrum version of APB a better review than the ST version? You say 'the Spectrum version makes better use of that machine's capabilities.'

Now I understand this, as it is also my opinion that the use of computer should be taken into account when reviewing software. So why the letter you ask. Well, when reviewing ST/Amiga versions of a game why does the above criteria not come into play? Surely the ST versions of Strider and Xenon II, and quite a lot of the other software you review for both machines, is making better use of the ST's hardware.

Come on guys if it applies to Spectrum/ST games it must apply to ST/Amiga games, or are we talking double standards? I do hope that you take the above points into consideration in future reviews.
Jeff (Mr Angry Inc), North Shields

Yes, good point. However, as the ST and Amiga are relatively young in the computer market (compared to the 'good old' Spectrum), it's very hard to judge the full capabilities of the machines and whether they're being exploited to the full.

But we do agree that the Amiga is probably the most under-utilised machine of the two. But should ST and Amiga versions of Pac-Mania get slated because they don't push their host machines as far as the Spectrum game? Surely not, playability is what counts. That carries a far heavier weighting when reviewing software in the TGM office.

The ultimate games machine?

Dear TGM
Here's a little question for you and all your readers. What is the best home games computer?

The answer is obvious — it is the one with the best game(s). Here is another question. What computer has a game which has fully-animated, concave, point of light shaded objects? Not to mention a simulated galaxy 8000 light years across containing 2400 solar systems. A spacecraft with 'alingual

conceptual matrix' communications and a Matter Transference Teleport System. (So there!!)

This game is obviously the best around, the computer that runs it must therefore be the best home games computer around. But this computer is not the Amiga or the ST. (Puzzled?!) The price of this computer (which is infinitely better than the ST and Amiga) is only £649+VAT and it runs BBC BASIC. If you can't guess what it is buy now then you don't deserve to have one! It is the Archimedes A3000.

Being a tiny bit quicker than the ST and the Amiga (15 times quicker) and having a minimum of 1024K of memory, the above game is only the beginning.

So, TGM, if you do not review this game or any other Archie games you are not going to be living up to your title.

Stewart May, High Wycombe

PS: Converting this to the Amiga or ST will be like trying to convert Zarch (sorry, Virus) or Conqueror (both originally written on the Arc) to the ZX81.

Archimedes coverage in TGM is certainly going to increase, however, we believe the user base is only small at the moment, therefore, so's the coverage. For the first Archimedes review look in Software Snax for Interdictor. And where can we get hold of this mega game? We're dying to play it.

RISCy business II

Dear TGM

Thanks for your feature on the Archimedes, I hope they will continue and become more numerous.

I'd like to correct you on a few things and also put forward my point of view. I have a BBC B but shortly intend to buy an A3000 which, as you said, is actually very good value. Subsequently, I've followed the Archie situation closely...

a) Cambridge International Software actually produce a TV modulator for the A3000, which I believe is free when you buy the computer from them. Also they are releasing 20 Archie games by Christmas, including clones of Out Run, Afterburner and Dragon's Lair! Not to mention an Arcade Construction Kit.

b) Conqueror was written by Jonathan Griffiths (but obviously used a number of David Braben's routines).

c) Exile is the best game I've seen on any computer but only available on the Beeb and Electron.

d) Clares have produced three games, though they might like to forget the first two.

e) Acorn did, in fact, produce an ARM development machine which was supplied to a number of companies prior to the release of the A310. They also sold a few for £4000.

However, the articles were excellent and contained some good points which I'd like to expand on. The A3000 should be the ultimate games machine, after all Zarch took just half a meg in a high-level language — one meg is now standard. Games like Interdictor; Hard Drivin', running at four times 16-bit speed; and Karma (an Elite-like mega game) could well sell more A3000s and hence open a new market for software houses.

I was optimistic about the major software houses being supportive of the machine, but some of their comments are alarming. Grand Slam took a bold step by producing Pac-Mania and Terramex but can they really be surprised that not many sold? They were released long before the

A case of neglect

'Just because those games are big licences doesn't mean they are going to be good... So, in such cases, you should neglect these games...'

...writes **Neil Robinson of Portsmouth** about the TGM policy of ignoring some games and concentrating on mass-marketed software — even when it's terrible. The 16-bit owner is also annoyed at the neglect of 8-bit owners. Why? Read on. Neil wins himself £50-worth of software for the TGM Star Letter this month. Air your views and write to: **Readerpage, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**



Dear TGM

It's summer slump time. *[No, it's not, it's Christmas. Didn't anyone tell you?]* So, why if there is hardly any software to review do you put nine game reviews onto two pages and four of them in black and white? I admit that most of them are not top-quality but the reviews of Quartz and Galaxy Force II both got over 60% surely justifying a colour, half-page review. Three games in the main reviews got less than both these games. Just because those games are big licences doesn't mean they are going to be good, as indicated in your reviews. So in such cases you should neglect these games, if you have to neglect any at all, instead of the games which get the higher scores.

Also, I agree with 8-bit owners that they are being neglected in your magazine. In Issue 22, Amiga and ST games reviewed are twice as many as that of the 8-bits, looking at the preview pages and articles in your magazine will justify this, too. Oh and I own a 16-bit.

Neil Robinson, Portsmouth

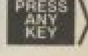
To be honest with you, I can't see what you've got to moan about. As a 16-bit owner you're benefitting from all this 'neglect'. But, anyhow...

The Software Snax section of TGM is a strange beast indeed and there are a number of reasons why software begins (ends?) its life there. Games that are low quality, have relatively low user interest or user base, that we're late reviewing (naughty us) or arrive too late to given a full review, games only reviewable on one format... Specifically, Galaxy Force is on the Sega, a rare machine in comparison to the popular 8- and 16-bit computers, and there is little significant plot to the game with unsophisticated gameplay — just dodge and zzap. Other than user base, similar things can be said for Quartz. Plot is extraneous and gameplay is simple shoot-'em-up.

Big licences seduce many users into forking out hard-earned money, often wastefully, so poor ones deserve to attract as much review attention as good ones, to warn people off — we're here to help you! As for the mono screenshots, the games were photographed in colour but technical difficulties (always a good excuse) prevented us from accessing them. (Someone lost them, in other words.)

Please also remember that as part of a trilogy of computer magazines from Newsfield, TGM sees every single piece of software for the major computers. What most people don't realise is that 8-bit is DYING. Less and less products are being produced for the Spectrum in particular (just take a look at any Spectrum mag to prove the point). 16-bit versions of games are usually finished first, so they normally feature in the main review. The following conversions are then reviewed as updates. If there was more 8-bit software around we'd review it. Everyone on TGM owns an 8-bit machine (C64 and/or Spectrum), so it's not that we ignore them intentionally. TGM's policy is to review anything and everything to do with computers — it just that the 16-bit market is now more active than the 8-bit. If you look at any 8-bit magazine, you'll find few reviews and lots of incentives for the reader because there's little else to write about.

However, on a brighter note, look at the World of Commodore Show report on page 49 for some very interesting developments on the C64.



'affordable' Archie, when the user base was very small and mostly for business, education and art.

US Gold have released Leaderboard and despite their claims, all the reviews I've seen say it's inferior to Holed Out. It's a cost-cutting botched job; does it deserve to sell? And when/if it doesn't they'll say 'We're not producing anything else for the Archie.'

Ocean and Domark sound more hopeful, but surely they can ride any losses of their first few games if they attract more buyers of the computer. All their games will be conversions initially (and why not, as long as they're good conversions) which as stated are 'really easy' to do. I know that many BBC B owners will be upgrading to the Archie and as very few major labels now produce games for the Beeb it will be a new market for them.

Even if the majors do drop out, the standard of games being produced by the independents continues to shoot up, notably Clares, 4th Dimension, Cambridge International and Periscope. I now know of over 100 games for the Archie, 70 are available now, the others are under-development or promised. So if like me you're thinking of buying an A3000 you can be confident of some great software for it.

Finally, I've seen conflicting reports in various magazines as to whether or not recent A3000s have a built-in MIDI, can you clear this up?

Thanks again for the articles, please review more Archie games.

Alex Card, Aldeburgh Not a yuppie or in the employ of Acorn or any software house.

Being a bit new to the Archie scene ourselves, we're always ready to accept a bit of advice. However, TGM's still very confused over the David Braben/Conquerer saga. It now seems that David Braben did (as you suggest) contribute some routines, however, some parties are still convinced that Braben wrote it under a pseudonym. Will the real Jonathan Griffiths please stand up!

MIDI is NOT standard on the basic A3000 model, but you can get it fitted from scratch or bought later for £30.

Everyone at TGM hopes the Archie will take off, if only Acorn could bring the price down a few quid. £750 is a lot of money for anyone, even the Centre Bytes team!

UNCLE MEL'S BUMPER CHRISTMAS TRIVIA QUIZ

1) Which software houses have adopted the following Irish names: CON O'GIT, I NATIONAL TIT DIGGER, LEN CRIES OL'TART?
2) Who are Steve Kelly, Eric Matthews and Mike Montgomery better known as?
3) A new record has been set for calculating pi. To how many decimal places is the calculation: a) one over the eight, b) one over a thousand, c) over one million?
4) Which CRL title featured Damian's recent massacre of The Time Warp?
5) Apart from the classical music catalogue, where would you find a 'dvorak'?
6) Of what did the French traffic police computer accuse 40,000 citizens of Paris by mistake, on 5th September 1989?
7) Apart from a naff gas privatisation gimmick, what is the Acorn version of Sid?
8) Within three years, when did regular broadcasting of colour TV begin in Europe?
9) What's the difference between a Cereal Interface and a Cereal Output Port?
10) What Scrabble word does the Atari hand-held share with a failed UK micro?
11) Mindscape's Fiendish Freddy has got Prince Charles's ears, but what else is genetically wrong with him?
12) Who said 'Computing is the subject in which we never know what we're talking about': a) Alan Sugar, b) Bertrand Russel, c) Adolf Hitler?
13) True or false: The Mel Croucher Corporation, commonly known as MELCO is the first Japanese outfit to be listed on London's International Stock Exchange since 1983.
14) Which of the following is not a genuine title: Invasion of the Bee Girls, Invasion of the Love Drones, Invasion of the Teenagers from Outer Space?
15) Why is Microdealer International like a good cup of coffee?
16) Name the TGM cartoonist who has created the SAM character for the SAM Coupe Spectrum-basher.
17) Spot the odd one out: William Shatner, Leonard Nimmoy, DeForrest Kelly, Larry Hagman.
18) In which computer endorsement will you find a rabbit suit, Mr Big, Club 30 and a guy with a chicken's bum instead of a nose?
19) According their latest brochure, who reckons that Domark are 'a couple of plonkers'?
20) Spot the odd one out: Bob Monkhouse, Jack Nicholson, Rick Mayall, Julia Fordham, Alan Sugar.
21) What's the difference between Magic Bytes' version of Tom & Jerry and a cow pat?
22) Where did the alien spaceship land in the film Morons From Outer Space?
23) DIANA has recently joined the Home Office. Who is she, and what is her job?
24) Which Code Masters title can be found in Randy Eliza's Rude Zits
25) True or false: in 1970 Disney released a film called The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes?
26) Who wrote both Elite and Zarch and what is the alternative title for the latter game?
27) What is unusual about the Sony MVC-A10 still video camera?
28) What is the Big Blue better known as: a) a tall Australian redhead, b) IBM, c) Bernard Manning?
29) Who wrote the theme music for the Batman TV series?
30) What's the difference between the C5 and Bernadette Tynan?
31) Loads of footballers have endorsed British computer games, name any six of them.
32) Name the computer that took over the world in The Forbin Project.
33) Fill in the missing words to find next week's front page story in The Sun: — Heat, Xy——, —ulous, —run, —gotten Worlds, Rick ———, Silk——?
34) How many bytes in a Kilobyte?
35) Apart from silly lips, what have Mick Jagger and The Joker got in common?
36) In James Gorman's classic benchtests for artificial intelligence, what beats IBM, Compaq and Apple Macintosh?
37) Who founded Cray Research Inc: a) Ronnie and Reggie Cray, b) Seymour Cray, c) Seebuggerall Cray?
38) How many bits in a nybble?
39) Spot the odd one out: Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Greta Garbo.
40) On what computers do the following run, and what are they: Fu Manchu, Jerusalem, Sex and Marijuana?

ANSWERS

1) Cognito, Digital Integration, Electronic Arts.
2) The Bitmaps.
3) d) Over one billion.
4) The Rocky Horror Show.
5) On a central European Computer keyboard layout.
6) Murder, extortion and prostitution.
7) Support Information Database bulletin board via Prestel.
8) 1 July 1967 (BBC2).
9) Only a few yards of intestine.
10) Lynx.
11) He's got two extra pairs of molars in his jaw.
12) b) Bertrand Russel.
13) True. Thanks entirely to TGM readership, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation have hijacked Uncle Mel's trading name of Melco.
14) They're all genuine.
15) You won't find either in a Maxwell House.
16) Robin Evans. The cheque's in the post, honest.
17) DeForrest Kelly (born 1920, the others were all born in 1931).
18) Moonwalker.
19) Domark.
20) Jack Nicholson, all the other jokers were at the PC Show in Earls Court.
21) At least flies enjoy a cow pat.
22) Junction 7 on the M1.
23) Software for the Apple Mac IIx to analyse the behaviour of drug dealers.
24) Treasure Island Dizzy.
25) True. Both the shoes and the film stunk.
26) David Braben, Virus.
27) Each photo also records ten seconds of audio.
28) Correct.
29) Nelson Riddle.
30) None, they were both driven round the bend by Clive Sinclair.
31) Peter Shilton (Handball, Diego Maradona), Emlyn Hughes, Brian Clough, Saint and Greavsie, Glen Hoddle, Peter Beardsley, Gary Lineker, Kenny Dalglish, Paul Gascoigne, Vinny Jones and Roy of The Rovers.
32) Colossus.
33) Red Bots Pop Out For Dangerous Worm.
34) 1024 (yes, I know it should be 1000, but I don't make these stupid rules up).
35) Jerry Hall plays the part of their girlfriend.
36) A cairn terrier puppy.
37) b) Seymour Cray.
38) Four, a nybble is half a byte.
39) Thomas Edison (Einstein and Garbo are officially designated as Geniuses).
40) PCs, they are all viruses.

The Games machine

READER CLASSIFIEDS

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THE SEARCH FOR CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Part One

It's November as you first see this illustrious page and no doubt your only thoughts of Christmas thus far are 'What the hell am I going to buy everyone?' But let me take you now, dear reader, to Christmas Day itself and the TGM office, where the Yuletide spirit is veritably overflowing... Well, almost

Snowflakes were softly fluttering to the floor, forming an ever-thickening blanket of white; it was, a gentle, almost soothing scene. The fact that this was indoors and the roof was in at least a reasonable state of repair spoiled the image somewhat. Robin was dejectedly grasping handfuls of polystyrene chips from a large cardboard box and letting them drift to the floor, the 'snowflakes' gathering around his chair and the many magazines, Topic wrappers and press releases strewn around it. He sighed, growled, and tore a strip off the box, throwing what remained of it awkwardly over his shoulder. He bit the piece of cardboard, scrunched it up into a ball, frowned, unscrunched it, hurriedly attempted to make an origami Eiffel Tower with it, then discarded it, too. He was more than a little bored and as frustrated as a Welshman with two broken wrists.

Dominic, brushing polystyrene from his shoulders, wasn't exactly bursting into rousing choruses of The Laughing Policeman and The Sun Has Got His Hat On, either — the grey clouds that hung over Ludlow, and the insipid rain that dampened it, went some way to explaining why the latter ditty didn't spring readily to mind. But even excusing the muggy weather (it was prone to leap out and threaten old ladies for 'three pence off Whiskas' coupons), feelings were low in the TGM office.

It had been a group decision that they meet there before going to the Newsfield Christmas party and one that Warren, sitting in a corner absentmindedly fiddling with his long girly hair (his hair had had difficulty holding the bow at first but was coming along nicely), regretted agreeing to. It just didn't seem like Christmastime and all the difficulty and blatant commerciality of finding gifts for relatives was an aggravation that had depressed them all.

Hanging around in the office, where they slaved five days a week — at least pretended to — was not helping matters one little bit. They were waiting for a late (though animated) colleague to show up and the time was dragging by, despite strenuously denying any inclination toward transvestitism.

With the kind of relief you experience on finding a toilet or milk bottle after drinking several pints of intoxicating beverage, they all heard the rhythmical jangling of coin-packed pockets and heavy footsteps on the staircase. There was a sudden loud thump rapidly followed by foul language, then after a few moments pause the steps resumed their pounding.

'Ha-llo, it's me!' Mark burst into the office, a tall, imposing figure that would've made Boris Karloff lime-shaded with resentment. 'Has everyone had lots of nice prezzies?! I've got a fantastic multi-function digital watch!' — he waved an arm to display a device the size of a small encyclopaedia — 'Aaaand a CD player and some videos and a few CDs for the player and books and after-shave and-!!' Mark clearly wasn't in the same nasty cat-kicking mood that everyone else was.

'Yes yes, Mark, but where've you been?' Dominic questioned in the sobering authoritative voice that he's so good at.

'Lunch.'

'But there's gonna be loads of food at the party,' Robin exclaimed, 'and we've been here for hours. Git.'

'Good good good good good!!' Mark grinned broadly. 'Let's be off, then!'

Robin couldn't bear to be parted from his beloved spanking-new sampler and his older, non-sadistic keyboard and packed them both up in 49 mutilated Jiffy bags, while Warren strapped a tennis racket to each foot in case of sudden freak snowdrifts (British weather can be a strange and powerful thing). Then off they did trot, jiggity-jig, to fun and frolics, perhaps... but most probably to sulky moods, sitting on the stairs and wishing they hadn't been born, Christmas hadn't been invented, and writing letters to Simon Bates' Our Tune.

Robin, Dom and Warren were reluctant to face the hustle, bustle and inane games of a Christmas party and so diverted the journey for a traditional visit to the Victoria Wine shop downstairs. It was thoughtfully staffed, especially on an otherwise national holiday, for the lucrative trade gained from the TGM crew, and also for the convenience of this author. Stocking up on orange BritVics, Topics, Coke, Caramels, Hula Hoops, whisky, Pernod, vodka, lager and blancmange, they loaded all their goodies into a few trolleys, carefully storing receipts as long as tape measures to later use to claim back the money on expenses.

Tying all the trolleys together, then connecting the lead vehicle to a leather harness strapped and tied around Warren ('I'm not into this sort of thing, honest!'), it was off to the next port of call — Dover. Er, no, sorry, my mistake — Woolworths...

It was with some eventuality that they arrived there, as it's pretty difficult to get a grip on a damp pavement when wearing tennis rackets and pulling three heavy trolleys — I'm sure you all know this from experience. Typically, their sparse music department hadn't got any new CDs other than 'ScreechaLongaSonia' (not that Warren could afford those gadgi shiny discs, resigned to a sad life of cassettes and vinyl); and the tacky multi-coloured tinsel, baubles and stars that so 'tastefully' decorated the store forced them to leave quickly and empty-handed. Just as well considering that, unlike Vic Wine, they didn't offer a special Christmas Day 'We're here to help' service and so alarm bells were ringing irritatingly all around them.

They quickly made their way to the party, held at Roger's house, partly because they could hear police sirens and partly because the journey was downhill so Warren had difficulty travelling at anything less than 57mph.

Outside the house, complete with Mac II computerised doorbell, Warren looked a litte pale and wasted, pretty much as usual, really, so no-one was worried and paid little attention. But when he collapsed onto the floor, screaming, kicking, coughing and reciting passages from the Bible, no-one was worried and paid little attention.

But what was that?! A spindly, slimy object crawling out of his left nostril. It was dark, it was spikey, it was evil, it had an Amiga Computing subscription, it was — AAAAARRGGGH!!!

What is the creature? What will happen at the Chrissy binge? Will Robin, Dom and Warren ever find the Xmas spirit? What is the capital of Albania? How many beans make five? Who pays this cretin to write this garbage?
FIND OUT NEXT MONTH!



PBM UPDATE

John R Woods catches up on all the latest happenings in the Play By Mail world

Siege, from Vorcon Games, provides a battle between two foes. The game is set in medieval Britain, where a fortification is under siege — but help is on its way. The two adversaries have eight weeks (turns) to reach a conclusion before the relief force arrives.

The game is played on a battlefield of 100 regions, where you not only control an army of soldiers, but also blacksmiths, mercenaries, slaves, peasants, etc; all who will help you through the siege! Features include tunneling, farming and tending to the injured. The winner of each game receives a rank point which allows them to progress to a higher level of combat.

Payment can either be in the form of a £12 one-off for start-up and the eight turns, or £5 for the rulebook and first two turns with further at £1.50. Each turn you'll receive a detailed map and analysis.

Tertium Games have gained numerous awards for their roleplaying game Calvana. They've now taken the step into computer moderation with Android Arena — a futuristic sport played in a 3-D maze. Each player controls a team of up to five androids with which strategical, tactical and diplomatic skills can lead to victory. The rulebook comes in an attractive envelope and contains excellent artwork throughout. Rulebooks for the game are FREE to TGM readers — just send a 20p stamp together with your name and address. Further turns cost a very reasonable £1.50, with no hidden extras.

Warlord, from KJC, takes place on a devastated world, where mankind survives in underground bunkers. As the timelocks open, so the people emerge into the bright new world, ready for war again (some people never learn!). Warlord is fully computer-moderated and has a total of 100 players battling for supremacy. To win, you must capture a fifth of all the surviving cities, not an easy task when everyone else is trying to do the same. Starter packs cost £2.50 (including three turns) with further turns at £1.25.

Another interesting development at KJC is a PBM phone line. The line gives information on all of their games, and could be particularly useful in the event of another postal strike. Calls are the usual 25p (off-peak)/38p (peak rate) a minute, so don't spend too long on the line! The number is (0898) 555077.

COMPANY PROFILE: GAD Games

Each month I'll focus on one company, looking at their range. This month it's the turn of GAD Games. GAD have been in the business professionally for around two years. The company started out running an amateur game called World of Chaos; a roleplaying game, set in a fantasy world. After this had been running successfully for some years, Sean Cleworth, the sole GM, relaunched the game professionally, using the wealth of background and intrigue that had been created.

A little time later, they bought the rights to an existing game, Soccer Supremos (from Armchair Sports, for around £700). Since taking on the game, many improvements and changes have been made. The next step was to take over a little known amateur game: Invasion. The game is very similar to the boardgame Risk, relying on simple strategy and not-so-simple diplomacy!

Their third game also came from a small amateur company, run by Darren Cook. The game, Rat Racing, puts the player in the driving seat of a mean machine, with race reports giving a full commentary. The final addition to GAD Games' line is Megalomania, a complex wargame run under licence from Odde Fellows and Co. Megalomania commences soon.

For more information on any of the above games send for the free eight-page leaflet.

Two-handed gaming

Two-handed gaming (2H) is similar to the party game where one player starts a story and then the next player must continue the plot. It is played between two players, who each control one main character, and any number of subsidiary characters. Each character should be as detailed as possible, and roleplayed rather than moved like an object. Each turn you detail a story with the two characters being the centre of it, and then send this on to the second player who continues the plot. There are several guidelines to help successful play, and it is hoped that you'll be able to add these as you progress...

1) The story should be told from your character's point of view — what he/she sees and believes.

2) Where possible try not to manipulate the other player's main character. Also, combat between the main characters is near impossible as there is no 'system' as such. Of course a system could be developed if so desired.

3) On the first turn, the starting character will need to allow the entrance of the other player's character. This should be left as open as possible. For example: 'From around the corner rides...' as opposed to: 'a six foot tall barbarian warrior with a scar on his left cheek walks up and says hi!'

4) Hooks should be introduced as often as possible. This can be in the form of mysterious objects or events. It is usual to leave the story on a cliffhanger each turn, just to see if the other player will get out of it.

5) Be consistent, and try not to contradict yourself. This requires careful note-taking.

This sounds confusing, so I've given a shortened sample of the first turn in a game I was playing...

Baarrmy comes from the ancient, and distant planet of Nuutts. He is roughly humanoid in shape, with the addition of antennae sticking out from his head. Despite the similar looks, the Nuuttians are very different from humans. For starters they have strange mental powers, and secondly they think in strange and often totally random paths, which they call 'logic'... This is Baarrmy's story...

'Burp... well, computer, where are we then?'

There was no reply — not surprising really as Baarrmy was in the middle of a desert, with nothing around him for at least three mega-wapps. Baarrmy scratched his head, trying to remember where he was. 'Ah, the party,' he exclaimed to himself, and burst into giggles. He quickly stopped when a large elephant appeared before him.

'Hello Baarrmy,' said the elephant. 'You were good last night.' Baarrmy began to sweat, and tremble... 'No, surely I wasn't that drunk... Please, no!'

The elephant gave an elephant grin. Baarrmy's antennae began to twitch, urgently trying to pick up a signal from a passing Inter Universe Bus... DAMN, they were never on time. Just as the elephant had gently rapped his trunk around Baarrmy's thin frame, his antennae picked up what they were after, and he began to vanish. The poor elephant was killed three seconds later when an underground volcano exploded beneath him.

Baarrmy re-appeared in a 'natural' corridor. It's called natural because every attempt has been made to make it not look like a metallic sidewalk of a large Inter Universe Bus.

'Where the hell are we going, computer?' Baarrmy shouted out. 'Well, I don't know, and don't call me computer,' said a voice. Then, from around the corner, in walked...

(Second player: Damian Keane)

...in walked a nine-foot dwarf! 'Hi, Baarrm, remember me?' said the walking ball of green jelly. 'It's your old friend Maarrm(alade).'

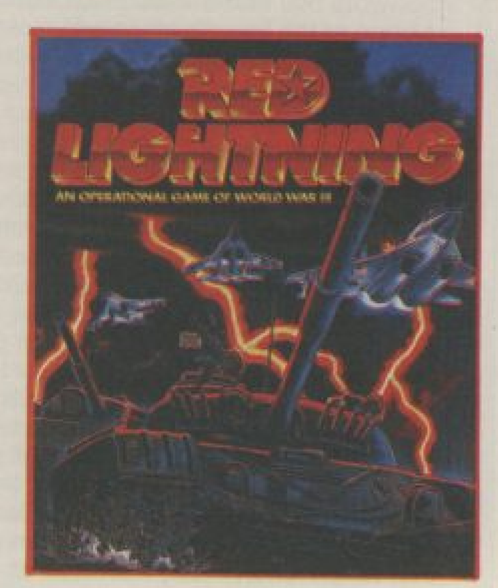
'Baarrm, I'll lay it on the line — I need your help. I have lost all capability in the you-know-what department! I know you can help me — I heard about you and the elephant last night.' Baarrm was dumbfounded...

Your 2H worlds can, of course, be a lot more serious if you so desire. Perhaps a good starting game would be in a familiar fantasy-type background. I'll be featuring more alternative ways to PBM in future issues, so stay tuned...

CONTACTS

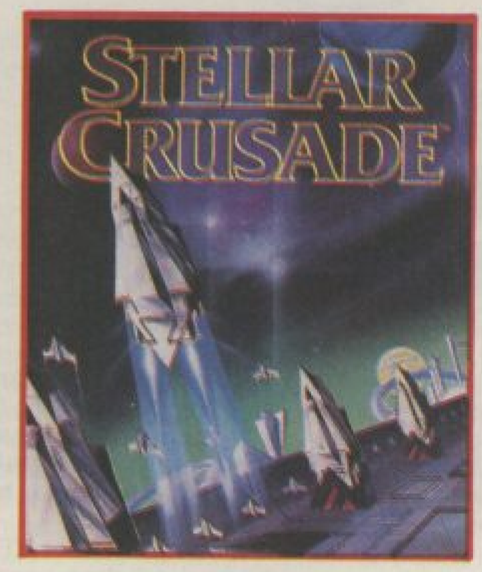
Vorcon Games, 59 Juniper, Birch Hill, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 4ZG.
Tertium Games (TGM OFFER), 27 High Street, Burniston, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO13 0HH.
KJC Games, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancashire FY5 2UL.
GAD Games, Marland House, Poughill, Cornwall EX23 9EL.

SSI... A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF ACTION AND ADVENTURE



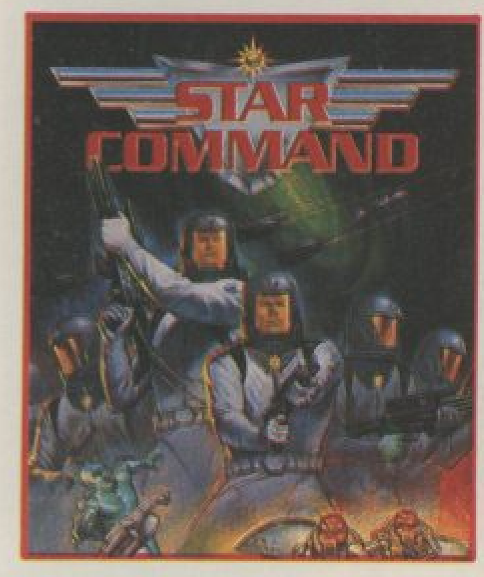
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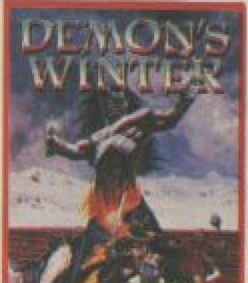
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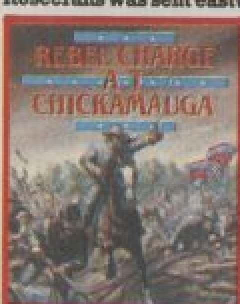
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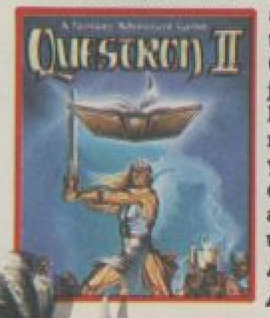
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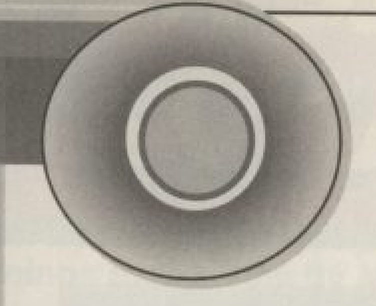
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The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

C64 (also PC, Amiga, ST)
£tba

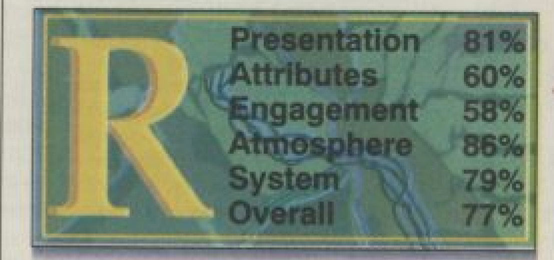
TANGLED TALES

Origin/Mindscape

Eldritch, your master, is not a happy wizard. Due to your habit of getting things wrong he has wiped your spellbook clean. However, Eldritch has given you a chance to make amends. This leads to three separate, but connected, adventures.

Unlike other RPGs, Tangled Tales (TT) thankfully pushes the hack 'n' slash aspect to one side. It's good to see that successful combat only provides cash. Your attributes are improved when you complete the mini-quests. This is a much more preferable method of improving your character.

TT also attempts to positively use characters/NPCs. There are several occasions where you need specific party characters to solve puzzles. However, sometimes this has been taken too far, where exactly the right people are needed at the right time for specific problems. Other means of solving the problem should have been introduced.



The combat routines, magic and character creation are kept relatively simple. Graphics match the quality of the interaction. When you wish to talk to someone, their picture will appear onscreen and a menu of topics will be listed for your selection. The interface is well designed, using icons and single keystrokes.

I get the impression that Origin have used TT as a vehicle to test a range of new and interesting ideas. Some of which don't quite work, like the NPC manipulation. However, Origin are definitely on the right lines here. Criticisms aside, though, I can heartily recommend TT as an innovative and, above all, humorous RPG.

ANOTHER EXCLUSIVE ARS

Infocom

Well, mes braves, have I got news for you! If you remember my recent Infocom report, I mentioned that Elizabeth Langoisey (not Langsey as reported — sorry Elizabeth!) — who wrote two of the Infocomics stories — was one of the few developers to make the trip to Mediagenic during the Infocom reshuffle, and that she was currently working on a secret project. I can now reveal that, along with Donald Langoisey (a graphic artist who worked on some of the recent Infocom adventures), Elizabeth is developing an Apple Mac HyperCard adventure. Mediagenic's Joe Ybarra commented that the highly-regarded Manhole and Cosmic Osmo have been little more than 'exploratory toys'. The new Infocom game will be more of an 'adventure'. A clue to the future direction of Infocom's products was given when Ybarra stated that: 'We cannot continue in the marketplace living off products that take eight hours to learn to play well, and up to 200 hours to complete.'

You may have noticed that Origin products have been fairly scarce of late. Reason being that Origin have split with MicroProse, their UK distributor. However, things should get back to normal pretty soon, because a new deal has been struck with Mindscape. To see what Origin have got lined up for your delectation take a look at the exclusive reviews of three of their latest. Talking about exclusives, you may have noticed my exclusive review of Might & Magic II. Now where has that one been all this time, eh? Well, New World Computing, the company behind M&M II, have split with their distributors, Activision. They have now found a new home with Electronic Arts in the States (along with Lucasfilm, incidentally), however, the UK arm of EA still aren't quite sure what's hap-

PC £39.50 (also C64)

MIGHT & MAGIC II

New World Computing

In Might & Magic II you control a party of characters in an effort to save the land of Cron. You see, awful things have been happening in Cron, of late. It's your job to find out what's been causing them.

Graphics are improved but they still manage to convey an almost cardboard atmosphere. Monster portraits are now animated, character classes have been modified with a couple of additions and the game introduces hirelings. The latter can join and help the party, but they must be paid and equipped.

An interesting additional feature is the introduction of secondary skills. So each party character can now have two skills instead of just 'thief' or whatever. While you're playing, you are able to alter the difficulty of the game (from Inconspicuous to Thrill-Seeker) which alters the frequency of encounters and so on. The endgame is quite novel, too.

However, criticisms do arise. The most severe being the aimless introduction of

developing new HyperCard game!

pening to it in Britain.

Right, it's soapbox time. It's official: Level 9, on release of their new Scapeghost adventure, will not be producing any more text/graphic adventures. They will now be concentrating on the new H.U.G.E. system (wHolly Universal Games Engine), which I reckon will be something akin to Sierra-type games. Pete Austin reported that: 'People have been declaring the death of the adventure market for years, so Scapeghost is an appropriate final release. It comes from beyond the grave...'

People? Who are these 'people' that Pete refers to? Could they, by any chance, be opinionated journalists who have never actually played an adventure, never mind finished one? The same people who, when any new idea arrives on the scene, promptly declare everything else as only being suitable for the trash heap? It is certain that these individuals have the loudest voice via the magazines they write for. Could it be these voices that Pete hears?

Many, many true adventurers will not agree with Pete Austin's opinion. I believe that there is still room in the market for the text/graphic adventure. Don't believe me? Look at Hound of Shadow, the new adventure/RPG from Eldritch/Electronic Arts. Eldritch have shown, along with Infocom, that such adventures have not yet been fully exploited. I'm amazed at the people who hail Hound of Shadow as some new phenomenon. Take another look! Eldritch have just taken the adventure a stage further (and from what I've seen, a cracking game this is going to be, too). What confuses me, though, is that Level 9 has put so much time and effort into developing their adventures (character handling and so on), but they are now prepared to drop the whole idea. One thing's for sure, Level 9's decision to dedicate future releases to 16-bit only will leave a great deal of disappointed and angry 8-bit owners feeling like the door has been slammed in their faces — which, of course, it has. So this is progress...?

H.U.G.E. will include digitised sounds, multi-directional scrolling, fast animation, flexible sprites and sprite parking. Mike Austin commented that it has '...165,000 lines of code and has taken ten man-years to develop.'

Anybody make it down to the PC Show? An instant cure for hyperactivity, isn't it? Well, I've sufficiently recovered to report that I was given a sneak preview of Interplay's Dragon Wars, and very nice it looks too. My first view of the game, an Apple II version, reminded me of The Bard's Tale with an enlarged character portrait window displaying complex animation. Further inspection revealed a more intricate plot, a more gentle introduction to the game (you are not killed off in the first two minutes — hurrah for that!), improved combat routines (although I would have liked to have seen further progression, here) and improved attributes. A review will follow anon.

I also saw Electronic Art's Keef The Thief in action. Your view being on the ground, through the character's eyes, a la The Bard's Tale. Combat is interesting as you are presented with a long thin window which shows your line of sight, in addition to an overhead view of the total combatants. Features include attacks from behind and ranged weapons. Interaction consists of clicking on characters present in the game window. Magic is also interesting as you must mix the correct ingredients to form spells but you will need to read the relevant books to know how to mix them.

Other quick peaks included a demo of Leisure Suit Larry 3. The graphics look superb and the story looks suitably saucy. Also looking suitably saucy was Elvira — Mistress of the Dark. Elvira appears in Horrorsoft's new adventure, following on from Personal Nightmare. The 16-bit version of Laser Squad looks very polished, too. In addition, I have received news that Softek are interested in Masterplay's Star Saga series. I'll keep you posted with any further developments. Oh, expect to see the Amiga version of SSI's Red Lightning hit the shelves any minute now and the C64 version of EA's Sentinel Worlds should be with us in November (£14.99, disk only) along with William Gibson's Neuromancer on the PC.

Finally, one very strong rumour and a bit of gossip. First the gossip. Did you know that SSI's respected game designer, Gary Grigsby, actually coded a custom version of his wargame, Typhoon of Steel. Apparently a customer approached Gary and asked him if he would be so kind as to remove the 'Banzai' routine from the game. He then paid him £150 for his trouble. But what of the rumour? You're going to laugh but I am, almost certain, that this rumour is true. Origin's Ultima IV, one of the largest, most in-depth and highly-rated RPGs the world has ever seen is being converted to the Nintendo. If this actually happens, and you just have to see the Romance of the Three Kingdoms review for support of this rumour, then the criticisms of consoles only being suitable for arcade games will be worthless. Right, I'm off to clean this place up and put some tinsel on the column — blasted pigeons, where's that shovel?

Paul Rigby, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

PC £29.99, ST (also Amiga) £24.99

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE— THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE

Lucasfilm/US Gold

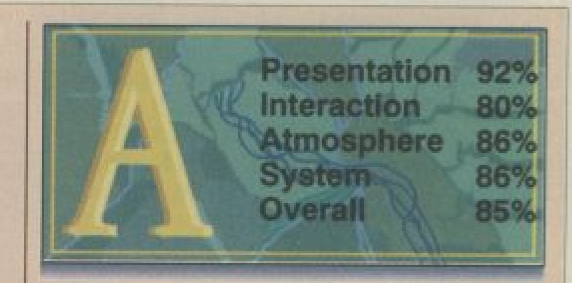
Lucasfilm follow on from Zak Mckraken with their adventure version of the Indiana Jones theme. The general appearance, user interface and method of play is similar to Zak. It is also just as enjoyable.

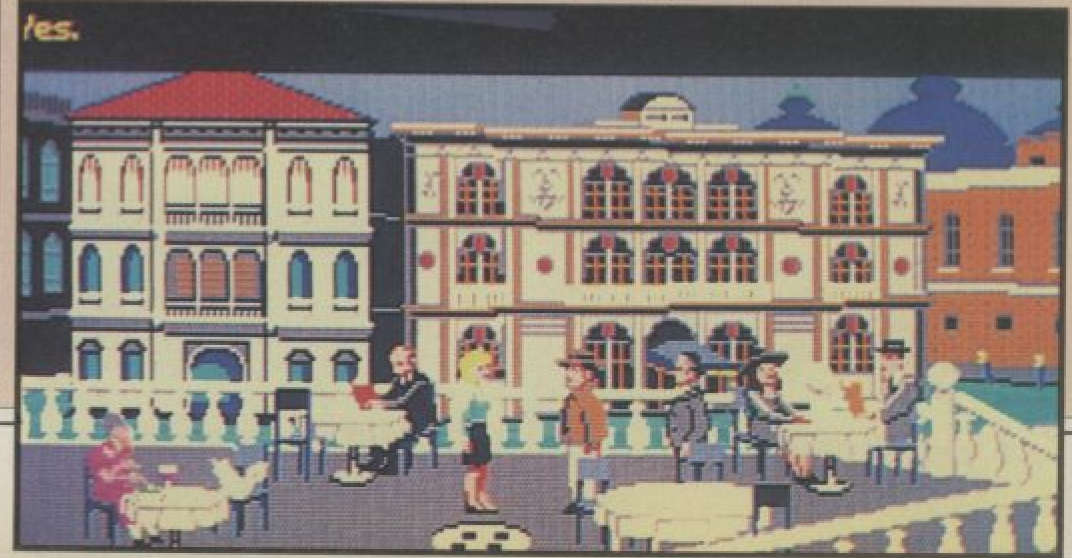
The basic storyline is that you must find the Holy Grail before the Nazis do, you must also rescue Henry Jones (your Dad) and cope with umpteen dirty dealings in the process. The game (and the film) do not tie themselves to the Grail legends so a new story has been built around it. A central object to the game is Henry Jones's Grail Diary which acts as a useful source of information as well as a subtle anti-piracy device.

Also, Indy offers more commands and special case animations so that the characters perform the actions you ask them to. In addition, there are a variety of solutions to the puzzles in the game, so you don't have to imitate Indy in the film.

Interaction is competently executed via a system of menus which can be used to talk your way out of some situations. There is also an arcade element in the form of boxing scenes which can be used when talking fails.

The magnificent graphics (which appear to have benefitted from dithering) for both ST and PC are quite similar, with the obvious improvements in the ST's internal sound. Indy is an excellent game which displays plenty of humour. Incidentally, the scene in the Zeppelin where Indy 'destroys' the radio was actually cut out of the film but kept in the game! How about *that* for value for money!





PRESS ANY KEY

C64 (also Amiga, ST, PC)
£tba

OMEGA

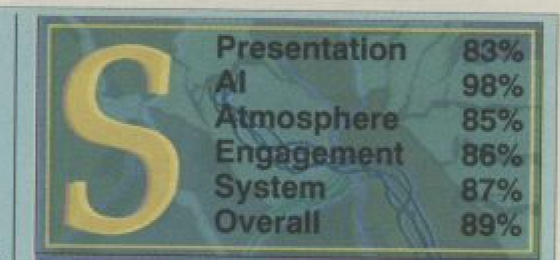
Origin/Mindscape

Omega is a tank simulation with a difference. Not only do you have to design your tank, adding weapons and armour, but you must design its artificial intelligence (AI). It is the AI design that sets Omega apart from every other piece of leisure software on the market today. You actually have to program the AI. Yes, program. As in BASIC, FOR... NEXT loops, etc, using the Cybertank Command Language (CLL). A series of pre-programmed modules are available for the non-techies amongst you.

Within the box are two disks, a 24-page New Personnel Orientation Guide, a 13-page Reference Guide and a whopping great 268-page Cybertank Engineer's Handbook.

You are an employee of The Organisation of Strategic Intelligence (OSI), a developer of military and law enforcement cybernetic applications. You work as an engineer assigned to a critical military contract called Omega.

Your job is to create the most powerful



cybernetic tank possible within the budget available to you. You must design the tank's chassis, including its body class, drive system, etc. When you have finally designed your tank you enter it into simulated automatic combat. If it performs well you get a bigger budget next time around. You will then be able to add more advanced equipment. New battlefields can be incorporated using the DIY designer.

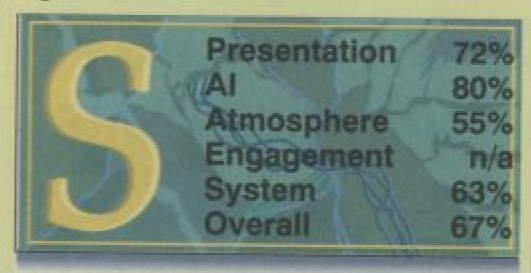
The AI programming function is superbly designed and well-implemented. In fact, if you are considering learning a language you could do far worse than buy Omega for that purpose and no other, as it is very easy to learn. My one reservation is that non-programmers, who only use the modules, may feel that much of their money is wasted. Even so, full marks to Origin for the high degree of innovation. My recommendation? Buy it.

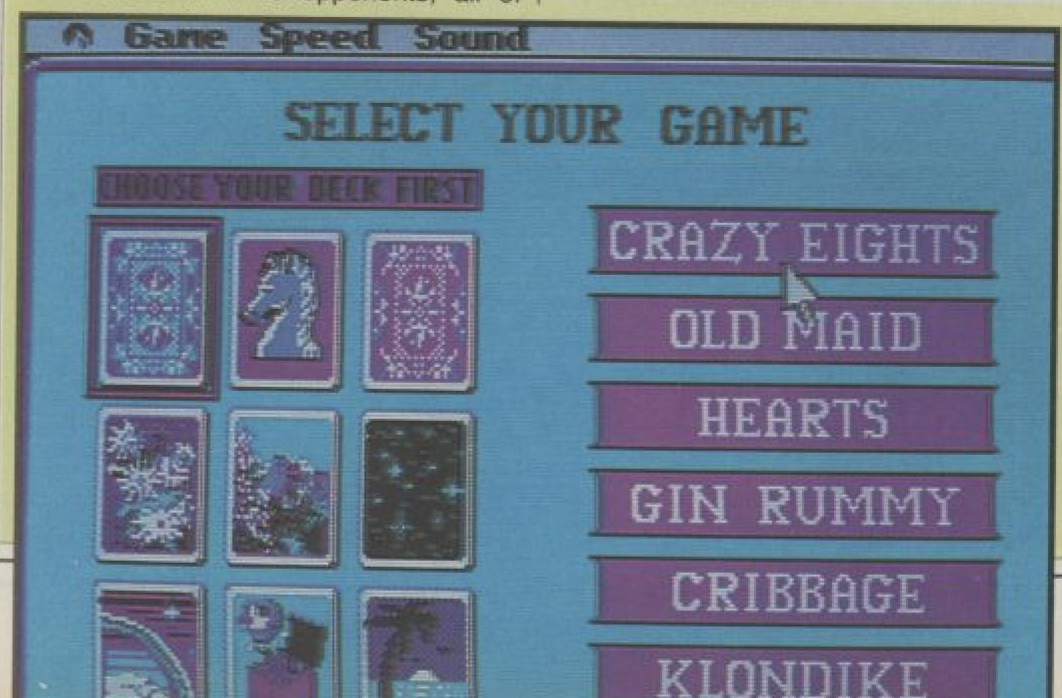
PC (also on ST, Amiga
£24.99) £29.99

HOYLE'S BOOK OF GAMES VOL 1

Sierra

A little bit of diversification for Sierra. They have licensed Hoyle's Book of Games — a sort of official set of rules for all of those timeless, classic games. Volume 1 — Sierra love a series — offers us six card games: Solitaire, 32xGin Rummy, Crazy Eights, Old Maid, Cribbage and Hearts. However, they are card games with a difference as your opponents are characters taken from recent Sierra adventures. So you can play Hearts with Leisure Suit Larry, King Graham and Roger Wilco. In fact, you can choose from 18 opponents, all of whom will offer some sparkling conversation during the game, in addition to animated facial sequences. While not a release to excite, Hoyle's is handy to have if you need a change in your gaming diet.





areas and locations which play no part in the game. These areas take a bit of getting to, can result in high character damage and will only end in frustration when you find out that it was a complete waste of time. I'd liked to have seen a greater degree of puzzles/problems and so on at the expense of some of the combat which was excessive at times. Overall, the sequel is an improvement over the original but by no means perfect. There's no UK distributor yet, however it is available on import.

Contact: Computer Adventure World, Bank Buildings, 1a Charing Cross, Birkenhead L41 6EJ. Tel: (051) 6661132.



PC £47.50 (import)

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

Koei

Romance of the Three Kingdoms (RTK) is a rare thing. A truly serious, strategy game with depth and fascinating historical background. Background that, I think I can safely say, has never been tackled in such an accomplished way before. Chiefly because it is written by Koei, a Japanese company, about the turmoil which existed in China at about 190 AD.

Based on a 14th Century historical novel (which became an official history), RTK contains five scenarios from successive time periods. The main screen shows a map of China divided up into 58 states. You control one of the historical masters, each with a variety of positive and negative facets, a set number of states and a wish to unite China. A variety of state information can be accessed (number of castles, horses and beautiful women (!) — all can be 'used' in the name of politics). Factors, such as mining potential, affect a state's economy. You have a number of generals and armies who spread your policies throughout China (using a clever combat routine). Each general has a different loyalty towards you (as do the peasants).

You can devote resources to flood prevention, training troops, building defences, undertaking covert action and so on. Trying to expand while keeping everyone fed, protected, loyal and generally happy is difficult because the computer players are tough and cunning. Watch for the friendly face offering rice and horse in one hand and a knife, hidden, in the other. To describe a game with the depth of RTK is impossible in this limited space. There are a couple of slight quirks in the gameplay (weapons cost the same no matter how many men you have, for example) but they cannot tarnish the quality of this product. Incidentally, I was very surprised to find out that a strat-

egy game of this quality and depth is to be released on the Nintendo. I've no exact dates but I'd guess the initial release would be in the States around Christmas. Are Nintendo mounting a serious attack on the strategy/RPG market? See this month's news.

Contact: Computer Adventure World, Bank Buildings, 1a Charing Cross, Birkenhead L41 6EJ. Tel: (051) 6661132.



ST (also Amiga) £19.99

EMPEROR OF THE MINES

Impressions

As a space age miner you must rake in as much profit for your company as is humanly possible. The targets being a number of moons scattered around the game map. To prevent the possibility of the game becoming a humdrum tale of astral-navvies, Emperor is divided into episodes. The object being that after a passage of time, a new set of game variables are introduced. For example, the first episode lets the player settle in, so nothing much happens. Episode two introduces the possibility that you might not be alone, the third introduces potentially disasterous asteroid showers and so on...

Which is all well and good but I'm afraid that I lost interest in Emperor pretty quickly. It lacks atmosphere and some depth of gameplay. However, it was the control method which frustrated me most. Spacecraft movement consists of clicking on your craft and then the area you want it to move to. I suspect that you have to be quite careful where you click because my craft never went where they were supposed to, some of them danced wildly around the screen. After hours of frustration then boredom, I sighed and switched off.



ST (also Amiga, PC, 64) £19.99

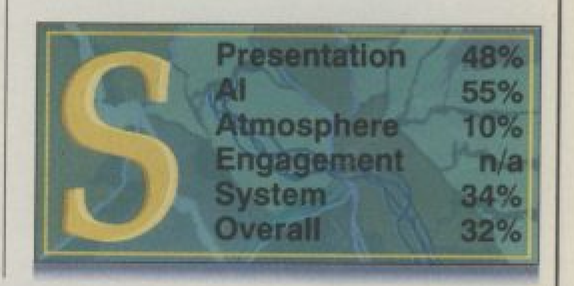
DAILY DOUBLE HORSE RACING

CDS



Daily Double Horse Racing (DDHR) simulates, according to CDS, 'a day at the races'. Therefore, spending a day at the races involves betting on horses for the maximum gain by the close of the day. The game can be played with up to four players. The packaging includes a relatively large racing paper containing the form for 180 horses and 12 jockeys. You can bet in a variety of ways: parlays, daily double, exacta, etc. After handing over your cash, you watch your horse race in a short animated sequence.

My problem with DDHR is that I became quickly board with the whole thing. The excitement of betting on horses hinges on gambling your hard-earned cash. That's about it. In DDHR, you don't — so what's the point? Maybe if you played a horse trainer, managed a stable and so on, there would be more enjoyment, but as it is I would leave well alone.



Version Update

PC £29.95

ROMMEL — BATTLES FOR NORTH AFRICA

SSG/Electronic Arts

Previously released on the C64, SSG's Rommel has been successfully converted to the PC, complete with a variety of additions and changes to system. They include the 'map walk' which allows you to move from one area of the map to another, division information now includes the number of battalions in the divisions as well as KIA info, divisional HQs which are attacked may 'shatter' which is then displaced to the nearest friendly objective, etc. Improved graphics enhance the gameplay — especially the combat sequence. Intelligent improvements and superlative packaging make Rommel a 'must buy' for PC wargamers.

MACHINE UPDATE 87%



Version Update

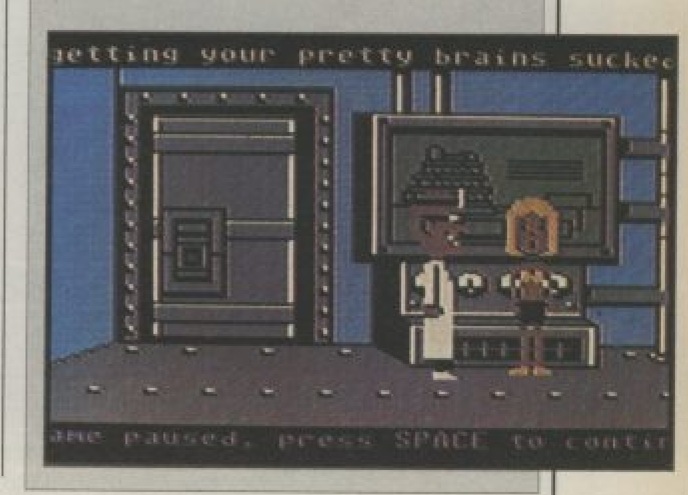
PC £29.99

MANIAC MANSION

Lucasfilm/US Gold

Well, I despaired of ever seeing a conversion of Lucasfilm's first successful animated adventure (yes, I'm aware of Labyrinth) which made its first appearance on the C64. The PC and ST updates are very similar, but the ST graphics have a little more finesse, sound is better, too. Structurally, Maniac tends to play better than either Zak or Indy, Lucasfilm's recent incarnations using the same system, maybe because the game runs inside an enclosed space (ie: the mansion). Maniac does have faults, though. You cannot control all three kids at once, they tend to wander all over place and the lack of sound effects reduces atmosphere. However, Maniac is still an enjoyable romp.

MACHINE UPDATE 76%





PC (also Amiga, ST, C64) £tba

SPACE ROGUE

Origin/Mindscape



On a routine trading mission in the backwater Karonus system your merchant ship, the PRINCESS BLUE picks up a Small Craft Distress Beacon.

"No life readings," says Captain Dalfree. "Looks like a derelict. You're on EVR duty, Private, so scope it out. Make it quick! We're behind schedule."

Imagine a 3-D space flight simulation, in the Elite mold, crossed with a full-blown RPG, in the Ultima style: the result would be Space Rogue. Designed by Paul Neurath, Space Rogue is a unique crossbreed of a game combining strategy, simulation, adventure and RPG, held together with a fascinating plot which twists and turns as often as your Sunracer spaceship.

The voluminous package arrives with two disks; a 50-page Sunracer Owner's Guide and Navigation Manual (complete with amusing graffiti); reference leaflet; 16-page novella; colour star-map; an advertisement for Hive (more later) and two models of the game's spaceships, which can be folded into place from a push-out cardboard base.

The background to the plot is that the human race are non to friendly with an insectoid race called the Manchi. A fact enhanced by the excellent start sequence.

Your ship handles very well, especially with mouse control. In fact, the designers of the flight sim area also worked on Chuck Yeager's Flight Trainer. A full range of external views are possible. This part of Space Rogue is a typical trading game where you must increase your cash reserves to purchase equipment for your craft. All of the 3-D objects move smoothly, combat is well executed and the four different docking areas are imaginative (some are ring shaped, others look like aircraft carriers, etc).

Landing on a docking area accesses the look-down RPG element, where you can trade and interact with the characters. The latter is accomplished via selecting menus of topics. Some conversations may involve news, gossip and clues while others may propose business or ask for favours which may lead you into mini-quests. You can also play Hive, an arcade game found in some bars. This is an excellent vehicle to re-enforce the racial hatreds towards the Manchi because the game involves, as Richard Garriot (Origin's founder and VP) says 'stomping on the ants'! It is a fully workable arcade game which you can enjoy within the confines of the game. Space Rogue blends action with an indepth story-line; sprinkled with humour, hate, revenge and all the other emotions which enhance an RPG. Thoroughly recommended.



Presentation	98%
Attributes	79%
Engagement	89%
Atmosphere	96%
System	97%
Overall	92%

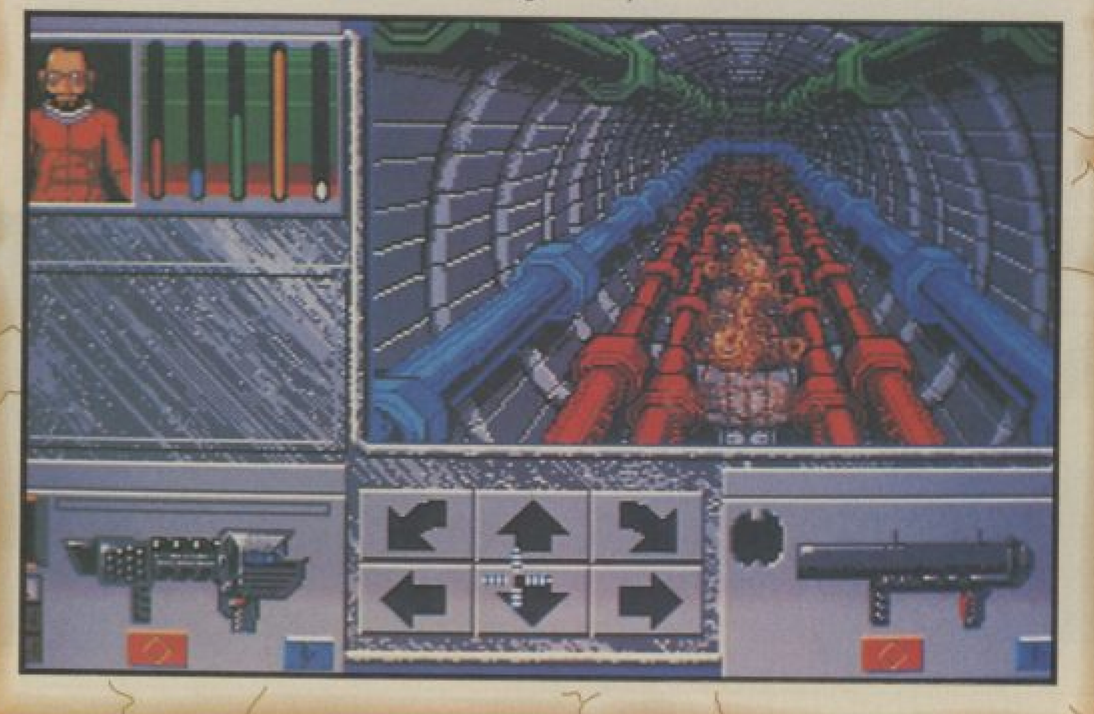
Preview

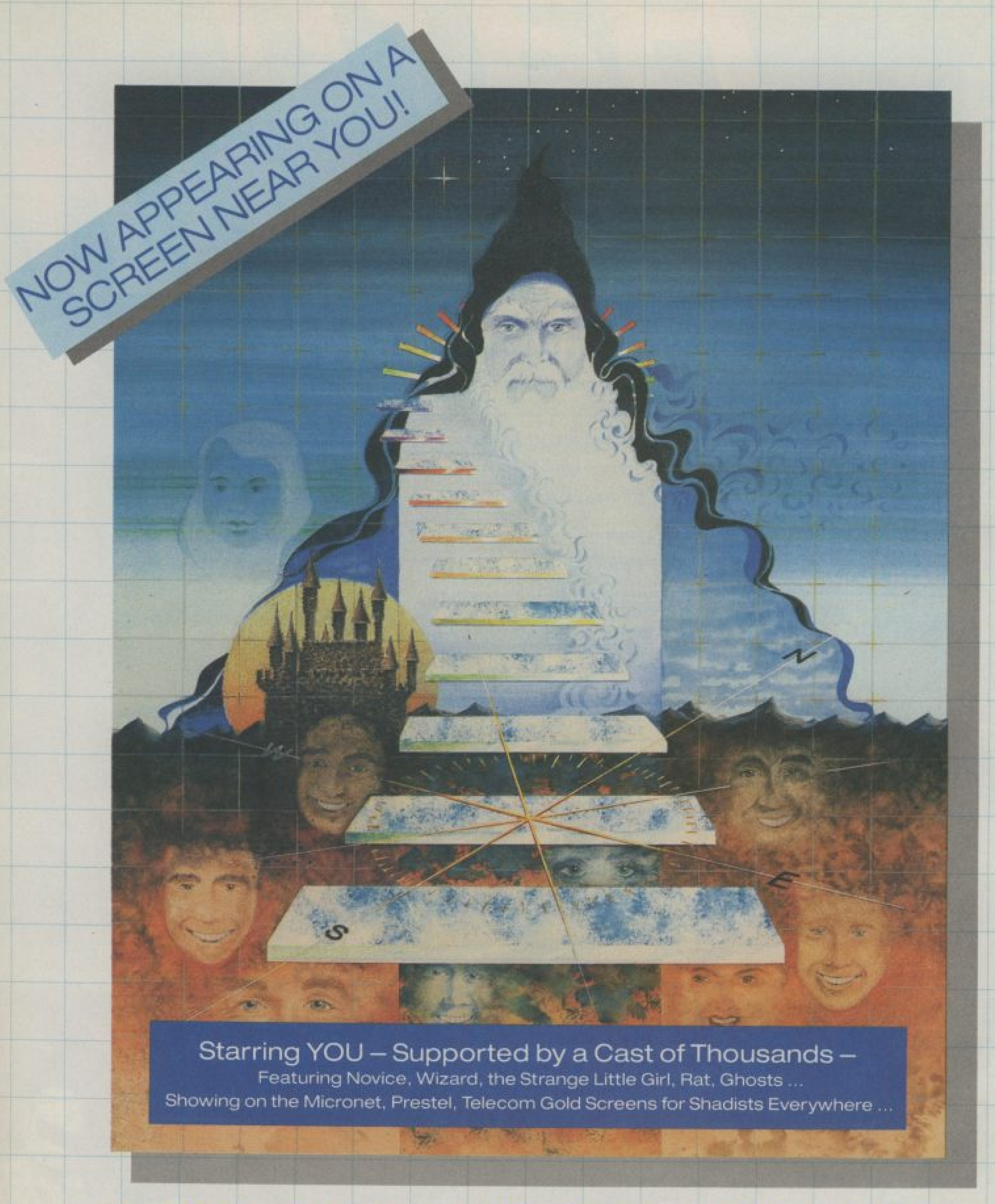
XENOMORPH

Interceptor

Xenomorph is very intriguing. When I say that it resembles Dungeon Master and the film Alien, you will understand why. The pre-release copy I saw was not quite finished but initial impressions are favourable. I just hope the fairly unresponsive mouse commands are fixed before the final release.

You must wander a deserted mining colony on Atargatis, an area infested with aliens known as Xenomorphs, in an attempt to find components to repair your ship, find provisions, fuel and re-program the ship's computer so that you can get the hell out. But what was the fate of the 200 workers who worked at the colony and where did all of these slimey things come from? Your character improves his attributes the more he/she uses them. Available for Amiga, ST (£24.99, November) and PC, C64 (June, 1990).




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The Games machine

reviews

TOP SCORE

72 ■ ONSLAUGHT

Are you raving mad? If you are or aspire to be, Onslaught is the game for you. A 'Fanatic' sprite — a psychotic solo warrior — is taken through the lands of Gargore, a warring country yet to find a dominant force. Using a map to select an area adjacent to the one you occupy, soldiers — some on horseback, some manning cannon — are fought past to capture the flag and secure the area. High-quality graphics show fantastic attention to detail and the gripping bloodthirsty action will appeal to Genghis Khans and gentler souls alike.



STAR PLAYER

90 ■ POWER DRIFT

The full, sit-down version of this Sega coin-op has been known to make a few people feel a bit ill so it's probably just as well such hydraulic extravagance is impossible for the home. However, Activision have successfully converted all the hairpin bends, roller coaster hills and the irresistable urge to win. With 25 different challenging circuits it will be a long time before you can hod the Power Drift trophy above your head.

86 ■ OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

The predecessor to this bloodthirsty game, Operation Wolf, needs no introduction and its conversion gave Ocean a deserved Number One last Christmas. The Manchester crew have done an equally good job here with its two-player sequel, the addictive gameplay retained and graphics painstakingly reproduced. Go for your Uzi.

76 ■ CHASE HQ

Here are the young men of so many American cop shows, speeding down the US highways, engines roaring and tyres screeching. Naturally, you're the hero, Tony Gibson, and together with your partner, Raymond Broady, you have to catch the villains identified by Nancy back at HQ. Experience the thrill of the chase and the game which could well hit the top for Ocean this Christmas.

STAR PLAYER

74 ■ NORTH AND SOUTH

A 'teach yourself Cockney rhyming slang' program. Er, no, sorry, it's actually Infogrames' latest release and has the player leading the Unionists (North) or Confederates (South) in the American Civil War. States have to be strategically taken, control decided by field battles and forts invaded by lone heroes. Inspired by Defender of the Crown, North and South has a great sense of humour, fantastic funny music and above all is tremendous fun to play.

80 ■ INTERPHASE

In the 21st Century you'll be able do all those things you've always fantasised of doing (eh eh!!) using a DreamTracks machine. But in Imageworks' 3-D masterpiece messages have been added to the recorded dreams, subliminally influencing peoples minds.Explore the surreal world of a security computer in an unusual combination of high-tech filled 3-D graphics, first-person shoot-'em-up and puzzle game that excels on all counts.

78 ■ CABAL

Ocean seem to have the monopoly on cursor-controlled shoot-out games — and Star Players!. In this game you're guiding the trigger finger of a lone US commando, going behind enemy lines to destroy them from within. Simple to play but highly exciting, fans of Op Wolf-style games will love it.

STAR UPDATES

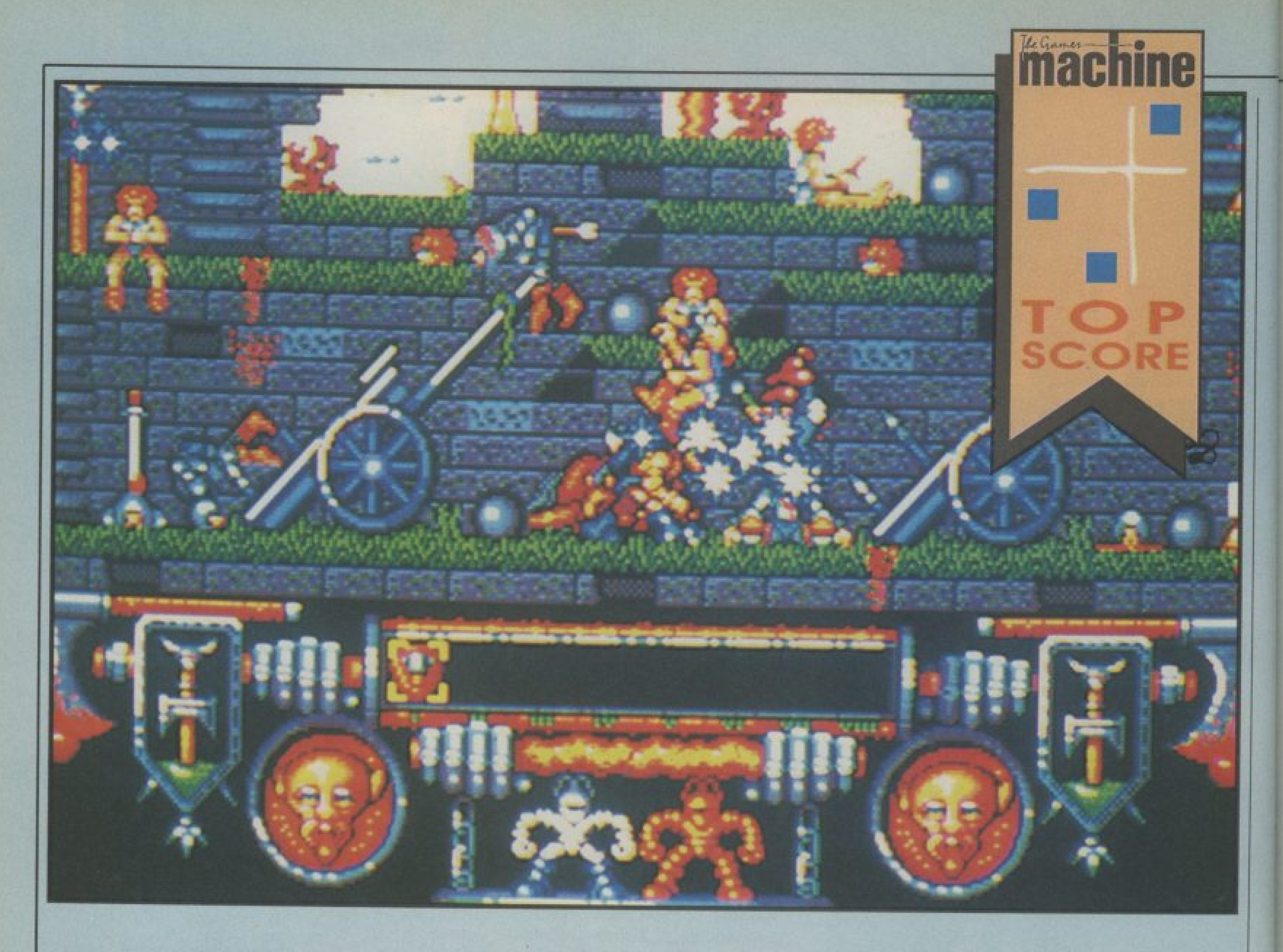
■ STUNT CAR RACER ■ C64
All the speed, realism and playability of the ST — give it a test drive as soon as possible!

■ APB ■ AMIGA
Domark get another Star Update courtesy of good old Officer Bob — this time with full screen scrolling and lively audio.

■ STORMLORD ■ AMIGA
While retaining the compelling gameplay of the Spectrum original, Hewson have produced some amazing graphics and sound for this 16-bit version. Go ahead and rescue some fairies!!

GENERAL INDEX

PRESS ANY KEY



Become a one-man army for the day with

ONSLAUGHT

Hewson

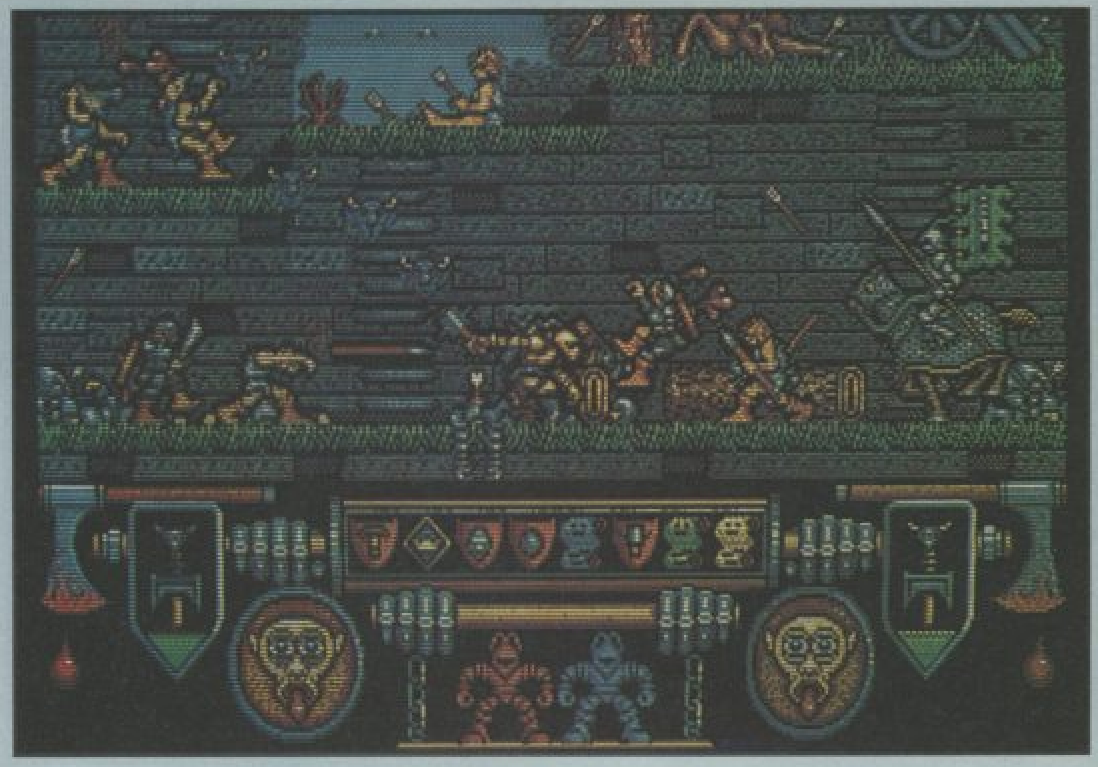
For years the land of Gargore has been at war, many bands of warriors have beaten each other to death in a vain attempt to gain control. Now one army has sent its secret weapon into the fray. 'Fanatics' are feared by all, and with good reason. These magical warriors live only to fight and are literally a one-man army. It is as one such 'Fanatic' that you are cast, a lone warrior sent on a quest to pillage, maim and generally make everyone's life a complete misery.

You are presented at the start of the game with a map of Gargore, divided into squares — each one occupied by different groups of enemy soldiers. The first task is to choose one of the adjacent squares, whereupon you're presented with a printout of enemy strength. You enter a battle ground next to your own army's flag and the idea is to push toward the enemy's flag, situated at the far right of the screen, and capture it.

In between the flags a myriad of enemy soldiers and devices try to prevent you getting anywhere. You start out armed with only a mace, but a variety of weapons — both magical and normal — can becollected including crossbows, naptha bombs and demon shields. Spells, talismans and cash bonuses in the shape of bags of gold also appear from time to time to aid your cause. All icons collected are stored in the status display to be used when needed.

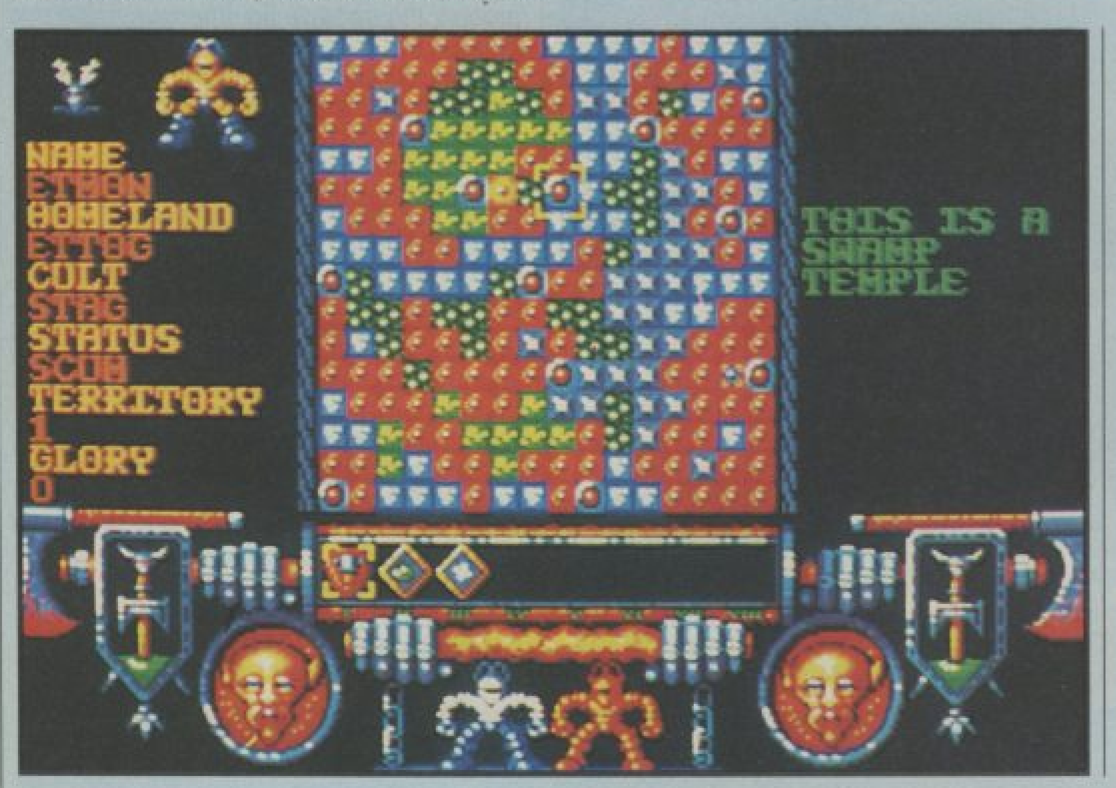
With each malignant contact a small amount of energy is lost, but it can be replenished by collecting the blue coloured scrolls which materialise whenever an enemy is killed. While you attempt to reach the enemy flag position, they are trying to take yours, so don't let too many get past, because loss of the flag means the loss of the territory — lose all territories and it's end of game. If you lose a flag you go into

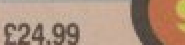




defensive mode; similar to the battle zone, only you are defending your land.

When an enemy territory is taken, or one of yours is lost, you enter a mind duel where four types of opponent face you: Commander, Chieftan, Lord and Demon — each one is more powerful than the last. Battle takes place on a screen dominated by a strange creature consisting of a head and long arms — your enemy. Controlling a hand icon moving around the screen's





£24.99

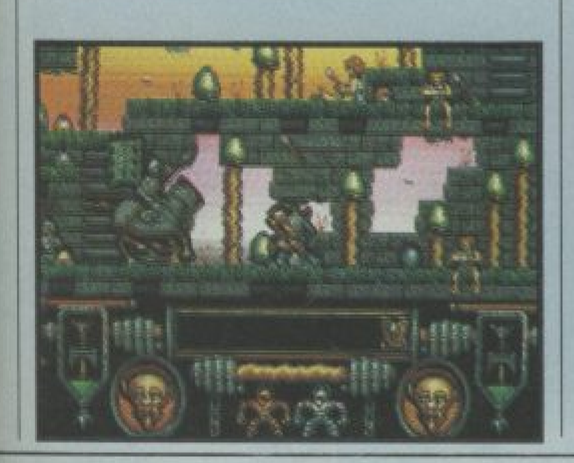
Graphically the game is little short of brilliant: the character sprites are colourful, well defined and a bitch to kill. Neat little graphical touches abound, the most striking being the reloading of the crossbow (when you grab one), and the enemy cannon crew who all stick their fingers in their ears when they fire their little guns. Vicious foes, colourful sprites and detailed backgrounds all add up to a first rate game

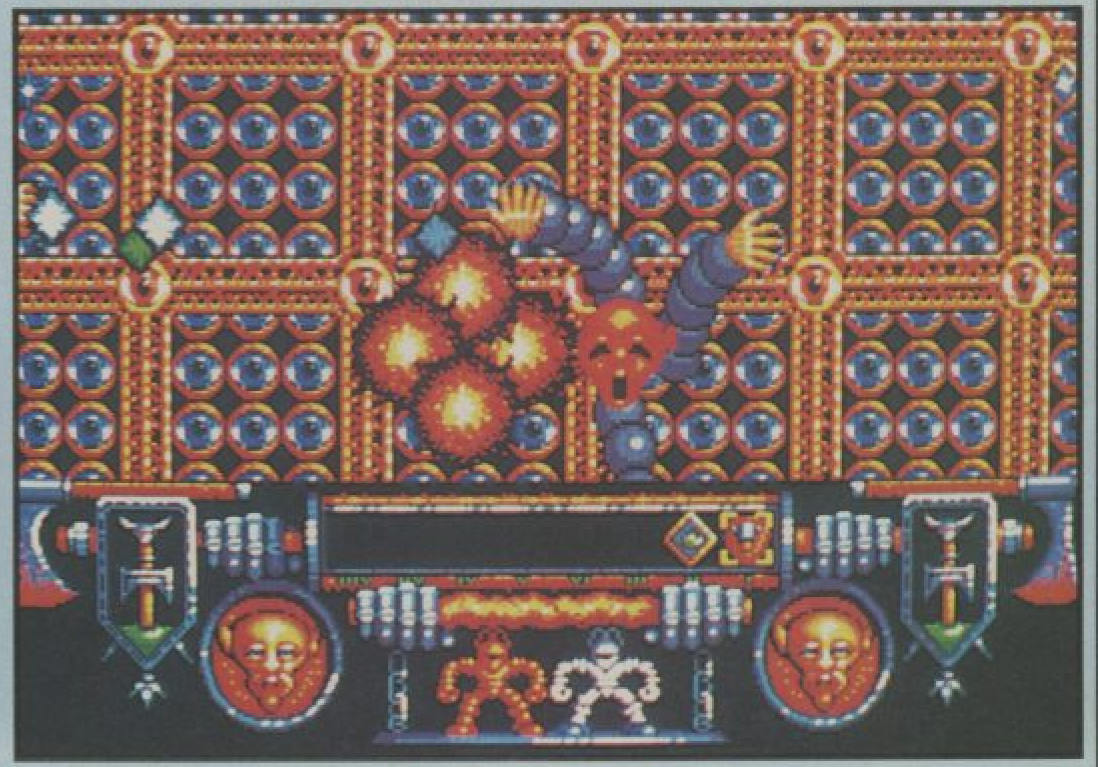
OTHER VERSIONS

The Amiga version will be here soon, priced £24.99

outside, bolts of energy can be directed at inward to destroy it. Winning moves you on to the next campaign.

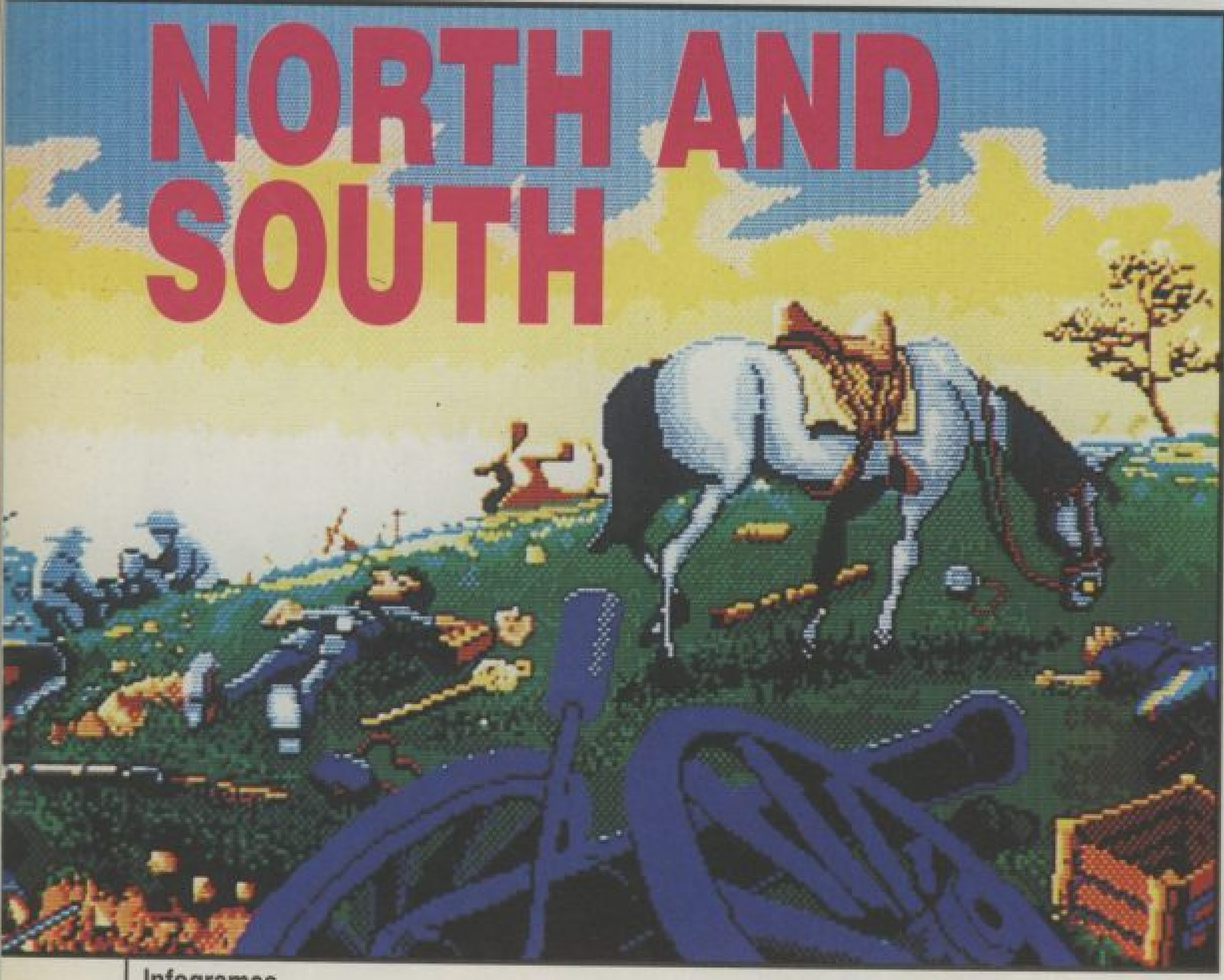
Onslaught is a great game of computerised violence, with plenty of rip, maim and mangling fun in store for a one-man army. Although the game is tough at first, a swift burst of energy on the fire button soon gets the adrenalin pumping and the onscreen character rampaging satisfactorily.





PRESS ANY KEY

NORTH AND SOUTH



Infogrames

The American Civil War was a long and bloody conflict in which millions died in a dispute that literally tore the country apart — a nourishing source for wargaming, hardly an object of fun. But Infogrames have come up with a hilarious war game apparently based on a popular French cartoon strip. The preliminaries out of the way — choice of sides (Union or Confederate), one or two players, year the campaign starts and difficulty level (corporal, sergeant or captain) — you're presented with a map of the USA, and depending on which year you chose different situations arise.

Each player (or computer in one-player mode) takes it in turn to move men across the map. Flags appear on the playing field to inform who holds what territory, but disputes only occur if a platoon of enemy soldiers are on a square at the time you attack.

In strategy mode the battles are fought for you and the outcome is known within seconds, but in arcade mode a battlefield appears. Now, depending on your relative strengths, each army is allotted a certain number of artillery, cavalry and foot soldiers and you have direct control over these and should decide how best to use each. If a battle is won you gain control of that square, if not you lose the territory and also some of your men.

To gain more troops simply gain land around the railway so that passing trains deposit gold into your safe (and gold buys troops), or alternatively get control of the state which governs the port: when ships come along they deposit soldiers according to the army that holds it. A word of warning; don't leave your soldiers on land opposite either the Indian or the Mexican because they become very angry, the Mexican throwing bombs and the Indian lobbing a tomahawk.

The Civil War can have looked nothing like this anarchic game full of the comical cartoon-style graphics one expect sfrom Infogrames!

The computer plays a fairly tough game, but it is against another human that *North And South* is best played. It isn't all about marching around knocking merry hell out of the opposition, some careful thought is needed as to where to place troops for best effect Military historians will probably have a fit at this game, the rest of us will love it.

MC

£24.99



From the moment the first bars of the intro tune blast from your TV speaker you realise this is no ordinary game. The hilarious cartoon graphics coupled with strange renditions of Civil War anthems and sound effects create an exteremely playable arcade/strategy game.

OTHER FORMATS
The Atari ST version is promised soon, price TBA.





Travel the world with...

BEACH VOLLEY

Ocean

As one half of London's top volley ball teams you and your partner are invited to enter the World Volley championships. The only problem is that you have to beat the host countries' best players to continue, but as the first venue is your home city (ie London) you don't have the hassle of qualifying. Although there are eight countries in all including America, Russia Egypt and France to conquer.

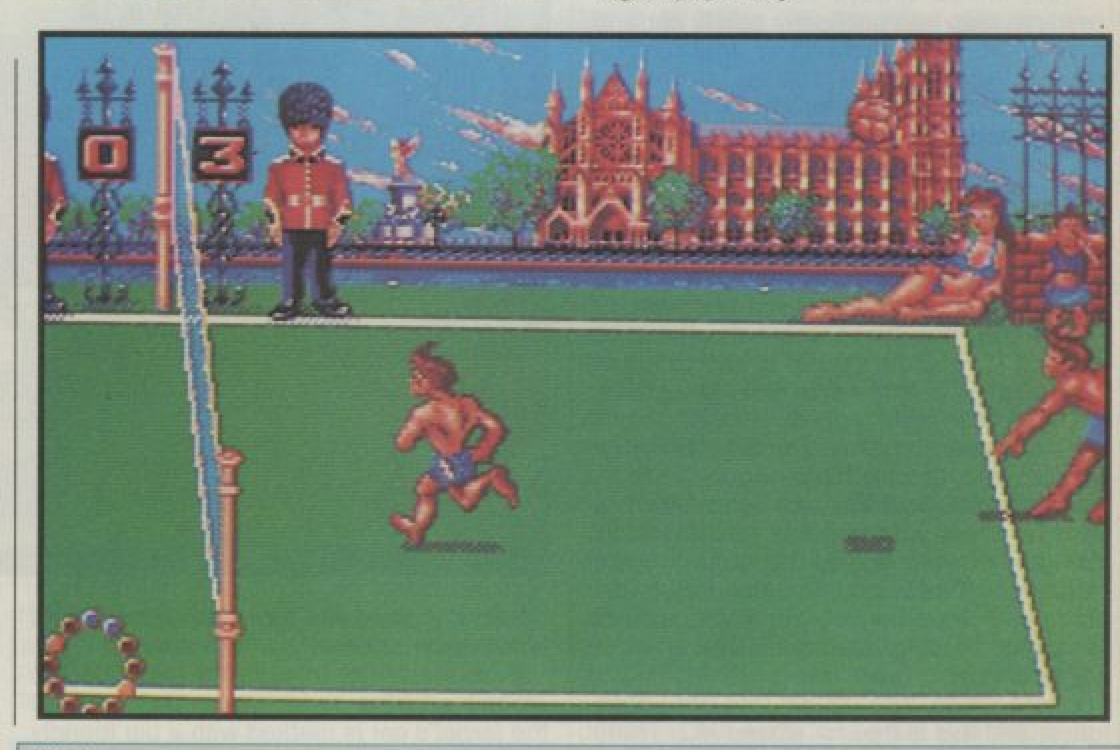
But to win the match you do have to pull some acrobatic leaps and bounds to score points. Seven points are needed to win a match, but a point is only scored if you are serving. There are three standard volley shots: the smash which can be used to serve the ball, but mainly to return it if your opponents try tipping it over the net; bumps are the standard defence move, here the ball is deflected with the forearms (and usually causes the perpetrator to end up with a face full of dirt); and finally there's the set which is used to set up the ball for a smash.

You view the players (two a side), with spectators ranged behind. Two Tower Of London guards resplendent in bearskins keep the score as both teams huff and puff their way around the pitch trying to score the most points. Service — either normal or a smash — is taken from the back of the court, and as long as the ball sails over the net it doesn't really matter which you use.

When the ball is returned, you control the guy who has a large hand pointing at his head. As the programmers have thoughfully added a blue cursor to tell you just where the ball will land, all that remains for you to do is to set up the ball for your partner to smash across the net (and hopefully brain one of the opponents).

Games are played against the clock too, but a nice touch here is that this is probably the first game to use music as a warning that you're running out of time; when the rock 'n' roll starts playing, panic, because a quarter of a million dollars is up for grabs, as well as the trophy.

Beach Volley, the first Ocean France product, is graphically and sonically is engaging, and although the sport (what with our weather) is a minority interest, thisd game could do something for increasing its popularity.



£24.95



The main sprites have a very nice cartoony feel to them, whilst the tunes and effects, especially the speech, liven the game up no end. The between-match screens are particularly amusing with the player and his pal reaching each destination by a range of transportation. The tunes and sound effects blend well with the onscreen escapades to add to what is an enjoyable sporting sim.

OTHER FORMATS
Atari ST (£19.99), Spectrum, Amstrad CPC and Commodore 64 (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) versions should be appearing on the shelves about now.

AMIGA

APB

TENGEN/DOMARK ■ £19.99
Atari ST 84%, Spectrum 86% — TGM023, C64 85% TGM — 024

Not a lot more can be said about Officer Bob and his continual search for law and order, except that the Amiga game is at last here and looking just as good as the previous versions. The only slight difference is in the improvement of sonics over the ST, but this is only to be expected.

Machine update 86%



'Let's go Mr Driver!'

CHASE HQ

The Games machine STAR PLAYER

Ocean

The chase is on! There are a select handful of games that could make it to the very top this Christmas and *Chase HQ* is the one hotly tipped to win the race. It takes its game plan from the most clichéd sections of Starsky and Hutch, Kojak, Miami Vice and countless other American cop TV shows (or movies) — the ubiquitous car chase.

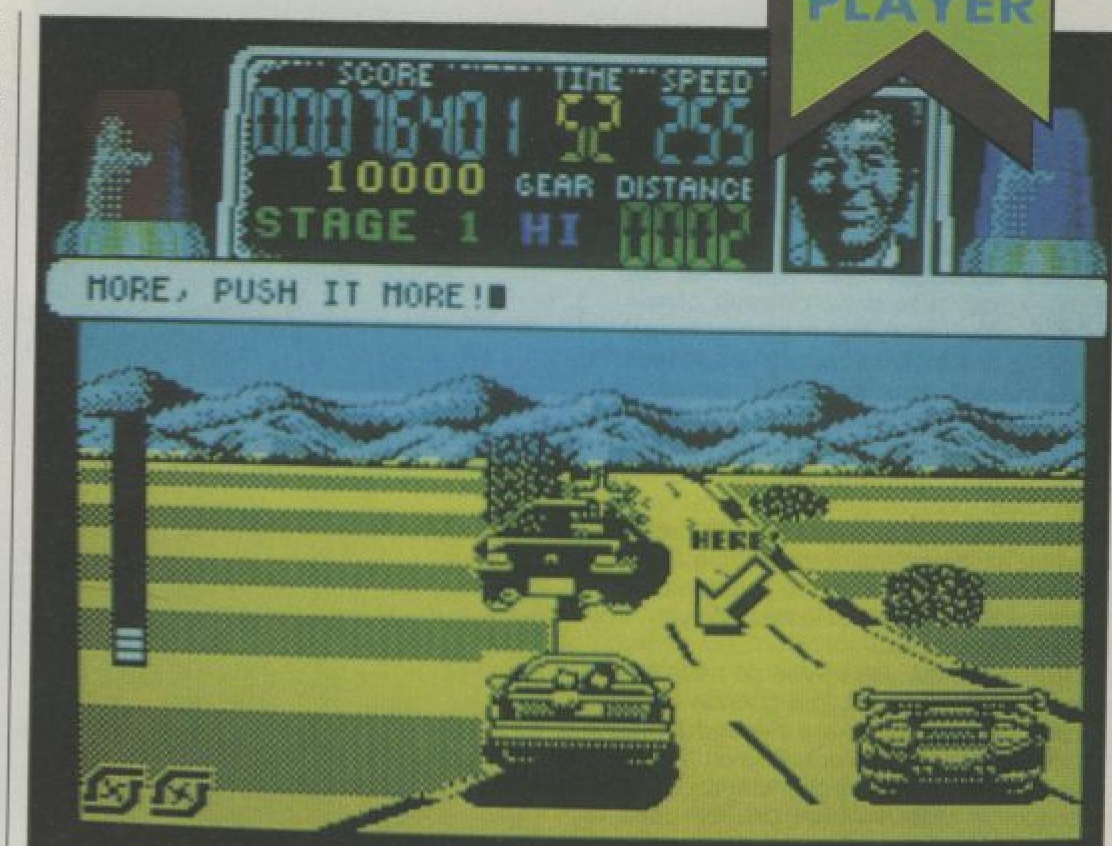
Yes, there's always some mean dude ready to leap into his flashy sports car and speed off, tires screeching and engine roaring, our hapless heroes never far behind. And isn't there *always* a big pile of empty cardboard boxes halfway down one of the alleyways? And a big lorry that backs out onto the road *just* in time to separate the two cars? But I digress...

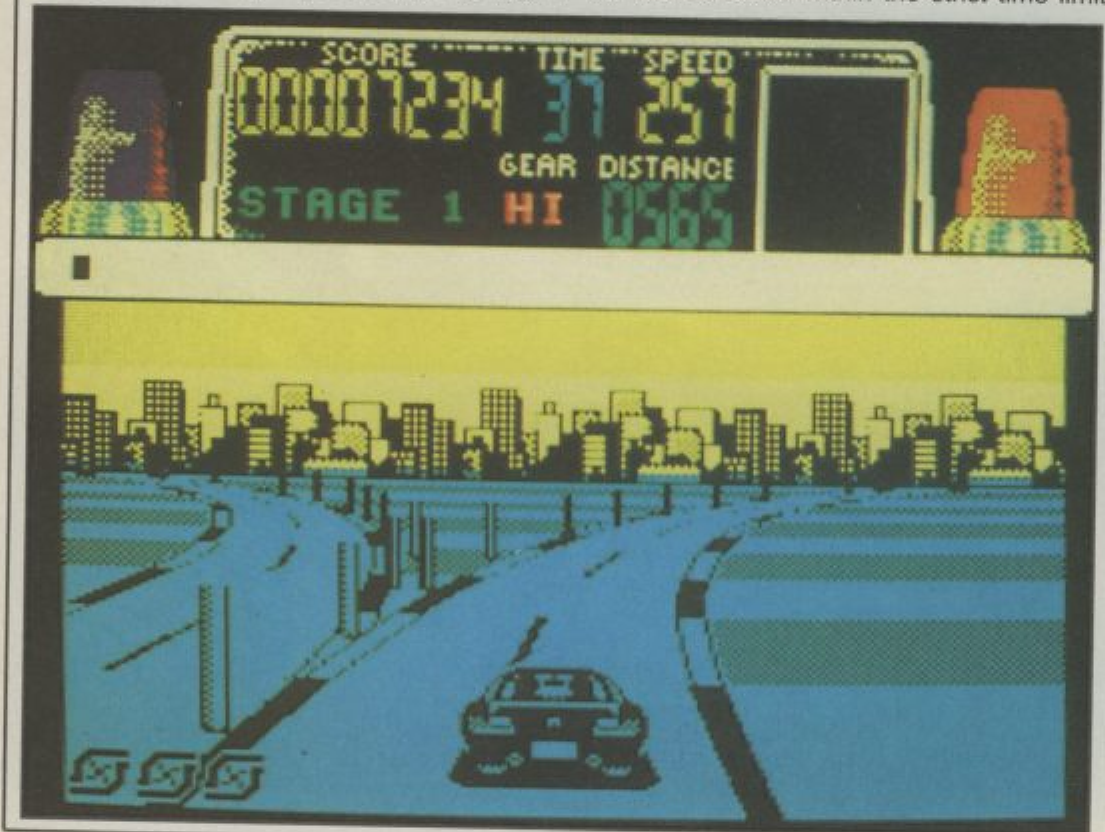
The HQ of the title is manned (womanned or personned) by Nancy who uses the high-tech control panel of your vehicle to tell you, the suave cop, who the next criminal is, what he's guilty of and what car he's driving. Then it's out onto the highway to begin tracking him down.

The status panel above the play area shows your score, time, speed, stage, gear and distance. This last figure tells you how far away your target is and obviously the greater your speed the quicker you'll catch him. To this end, you can kick in the turbo unit when the two gears are just not enough, sending you accelerating in a cloud of dust.

'More haste, less speed', the old adage goes, and this is true for *Chase HQ*. There are junctions to be navigated, the correct turning given by a scrolling message sent by Nancy, and it can be easy to go the wrong way at high speed. And at high speed it's obviously more difficult to avoid time-wasting collisions and crashes.

With the target in sight the siren begins wailing and the red beacon flashing, and the target's car is marked with a big friendly arrow. Your car has to repeatedly ram his in order to damage it/worry him enough to force him to pull over; indicated by a vertical bar. Succeed within the strict time limit







£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

There are a good spread of colours in the status area which compensates a little for the mono road and cars, and the cameos of the hero and villains that appear on its miniscreen are very nicely drawn. Vehicles are clear and neatly designed if not detailed, and the main sprite bobs and weaves nicely. Though roadside features don't update as smoothly as they could, they approach swiftly and are helped by the brilliant, smooth and realistic perspective of the landscape stripes and the road itself. The title screens have their own attractions, with a number of sequences involving the letters which form 'Chase HQ' — zooming in from infinity, bouncing full-stops, letters hitting stops into position and so on. Though spot effects are merely average, 128K owners are in for a real treat. Various pieces of music simulate six channels, realistic bass and snare drums combined with complex sounds reminiscent of the better Commodore 64 instruments. On its aural qualities alone Chase HQ is worth a look, but considering the game they accompany it's an essential purchase.



and it's on to the next case. Fail and Nancy has some harsh words for you... and maybe even a letter of dismissal.

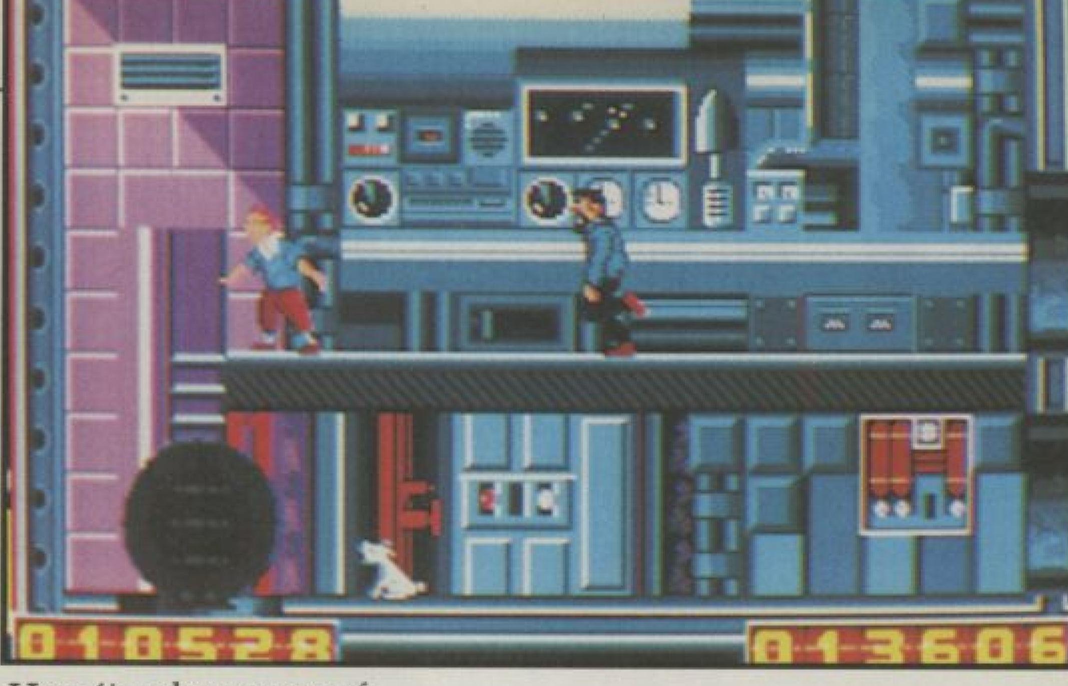
It's a pleasant surprise that a simple twist to the used and abused racing genre can make a game very, very playable. In the average racer you're pursuing the leader so as to overtake and head the field. Chasing a distinct car with a view to forcing it to stop and comdemning its driver to incarceration gives a real purpose to skidding around miles of twisting, tortuous roads, dodging traffic.

Levels don't just differ in colour and simple roadside alterations. Cliffs, bridges, junctions and buildings all help to make each of the five levels distinct and each of the five chases compelling. Five levels may not seem like much, but sending the first villain to the slammer takes enough effort for you to realise this game is no pushover, and arrest times (and so score bonuses) are always rewarding to beat.

Chase HQ really shows what job satisfaction is. Being a cop and bringing a villain to justice brings real pleasure into an already playable game and helps make it an addicitive pastime. Will brighten up your Christmas stocking.

WL

OTHER FORMATS
Atari ST (£19.99), Amiga (£24.99), Commodore 64 and Amstrad (Spectrum prices) released around December 4.



Hergé's adventures of...

TINTIN ON THE MOON

Infogrames

Cult comic-strip book hero from the Fifties, and converted to popular TV series, it's strange that it has taken so long for the French detective to make it onto computer The first moon rocket is about to be launched from the Atomic Research Centre at Sprodj in Syldavia and aboard is our the unlikely hero TinTin — along with Snowy the wonder dog, Captain Haddock, Professor Calculus and Engineer Wolff. The game begins with the ship standing on the launch pad, the gantry is wheeled away and the countdown begins 5-4-3-2-1; and the ship blasts off. The first task is to guide the rocket around the screen collecting red and yellow spheres, but avoiding the large chunks of rock that spin toward you. Yellow spheres top up your energy level (which shoots down at an alarming rate if you are hit by rocks) and eight red spheres must be collected before you are allowed to move onto the next section . You are then taken into the rocket to take control of TinTin as he attempts to complete four tasks before you reach the moon.

They are: extinguish fires that spring up without warning and usually without any plausable cause (fire extinguishers can be found lying around for this purpose), defuse the bombs a despicable baddie called Colonel Boris has planted, rescue your friends from the clutchs of the evil Colonel and finally capture him. Your colleagues wander around the screen with you, but they do very little except end up being tied by Colonel Boris and thus need rescuing. Fire fighting and bomb defusing are the top priorities, but once in a while you return to the guide the ship into the spheres routine which replenishes lost energy. The game carries on in this vein between the onboard and space scenes until you finally reach the moon.

MC



£19.99

The opening sequence sets the tone for a comic romp and the ingame graphics keep the feel going well. But the 16-bit versions suffer from being too hard to play, so that only its associations are likely to make it appeal to Hergé fans.



£19.99

Virtually identical to the Amiga game, the ST version suffers a little in the sonics department, but Colonel Boris is still as much of a swine to beat.

OTHER FORMATS
No other versions are planned.

Commodore 64/128

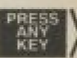
Battle Chess

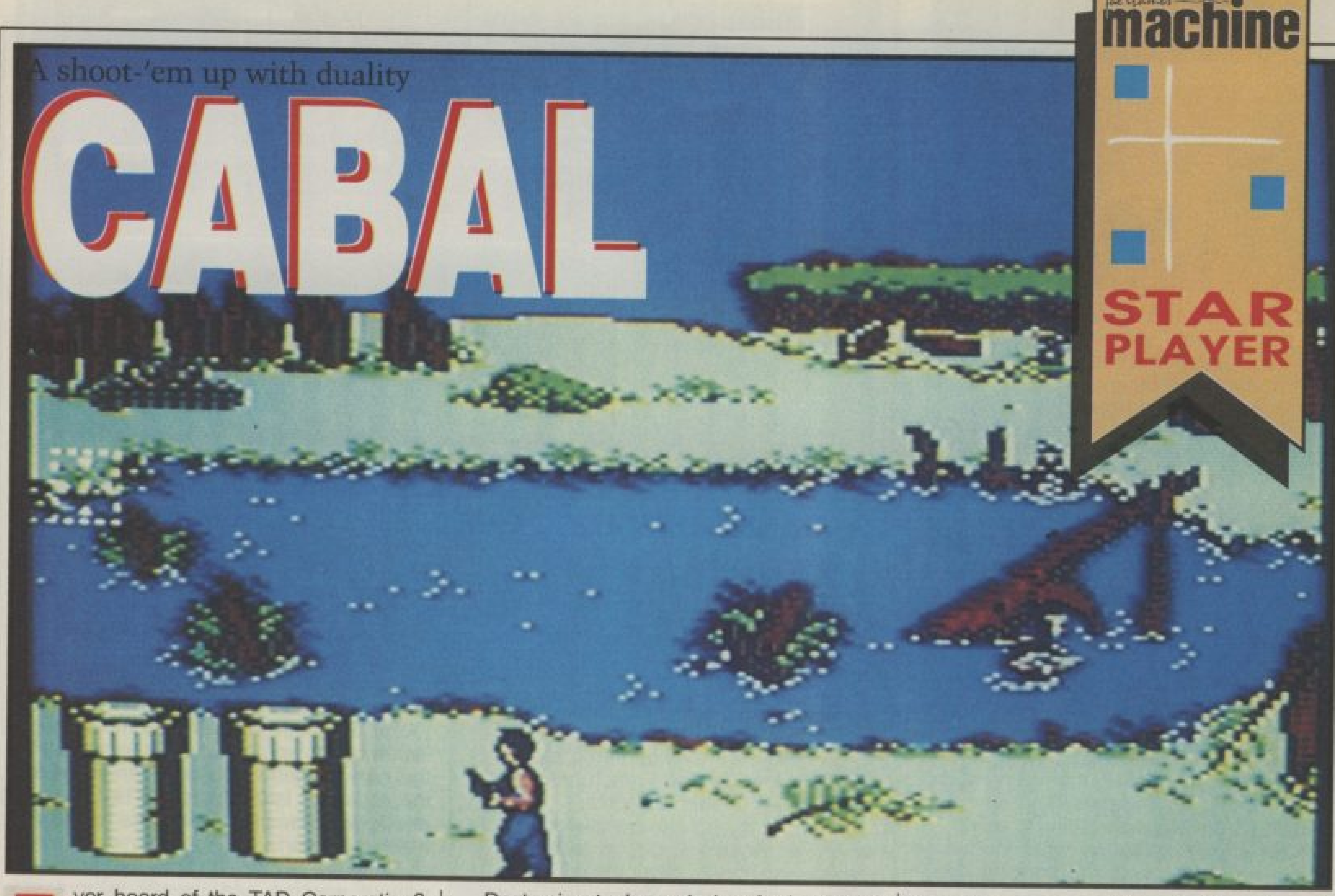
Electronic Arts ■ £14.99 disk only
Amiga 83% — TGM012, Atari ST 86% — TGM020

The intricacy of the 16-bit graphics which describe this unusual form of chess may explain the time it has taken for an 8-bit version of the game to appear, but a good job has been done. Although the characters are on the blocky side, the game's sheer playability ensures a high rating for its C64 incarnation. Battle Chess gives the ancient board game a lift by making all the player pieces into fighting warriors who won't leave the board without a bloody and often hilarious battle. Notwithstanding the fun element, the game still plays a mean hand when it comes to traditional values.

Machine Update

The Games machine STAR UPDATE





A shoot-'em up with duality

CABAL

Ever heard of the TAD Corporation? Probably not, but if you've played this coin-op you may recall that they are arcade game manufacturers, this being their highest profile machine so far. The plot leaves something to be desired: it's the usual story of an experienced US commando being held in high regard by his peers and so being selected for a special mission. The Enemy are making a nuisance of themselves but are prepared for a full-scale attack so it's up to him to go it alone and destroy them from within.

In each of the 20 single-screen levels you guide the commando left and right in front of a perspective scene of part of the enemy's base. A gunsight cursor has the freedom of the playing area and is used to gun down any enemy soldiers who dare show themselves. Bullets are unlimited but there are a handful of grenades, also aimed with the cursor, which can be used on tanks, planes, helicopters, buildings and, if you're particularly nasty, bunches of people.

Icons released from the remains of such larger targets can be collected for extra points, grenades, a bazooka or machine gun. The latter weaponry is lost whenever a life is, but walls act as shields against the relentless hail of bullets.

As enemies are maimed a blue bar gradually turns red; when it's full the screen and scene is completed.

Cabal is quite a surprise. Though it's essentially a static screen Operation Wolf and appears plain when watching someone play it, it's quite deceptive. The adrenalin soon gets flowing as you shoot out soldiers while dodging their fire, and it's this duality that makes it so exciting: at the middle and top of the screen you have to get them in your sights and blow them away as quickly as possible while making sure you, at the bottom of the screen, don't get hit yourself. Two eyes are not enough!

Destroying tanks and aircraft also forces a battle on two fronts: just as you've lined it up, ready to launch a grenade with the space bar, you see a bullet heading straight for you and have to abandon your plans. Even without heavy artillery, just taking out the soldiers is tough enough. You find yourself dashing frantically from one side to another, gambling whether you can safely pass by an approaching missile, and pushing the fire button like mad — it really puts your index finger to the test!

Operation Wolf/Thunderbolt fans are sure to warm to this and indeed other gamesplayers will like its direct combat too. There's no depth or sophistication to Cabal, just fast, non-stop action and a hell of a lot of bullets flying around, but it's more than enough to keep you playing — it can be as addictive as the Ops, which is surely recommendation enough for purchase.

WL

SPECTRUM 86%

£8.99 cass, £14.99 disk

The Spectrum's options and hi-score screens immediately attract attention, a rainbow of colours pulsating through the text, rushing outwards from the centre of the screen. The game screens are laid out carefully so that, although clash is not defied, different areas have their own colours, so that on certain levels there are five different colours on the playing area. Like the Commodore, backgrounds aren't detailed but are functional, although bullets can sometimes get lost in the monochrome. Sprites are very cartoon-like; soldiers have huge clown feet and stroll around jauntily and the main sprite is a bulky, mean-looking dude. The tanks move very quickly but bullets come in from less diverse angles than the Commodore, although there's a sting in the tail: when a life is lost your enemy-meter goes down, giving you some unwelcome extra work before the level can be completed. However, the satisfaction on doing that easily makes it all worthwhile so you're sure to keep playing and playing.

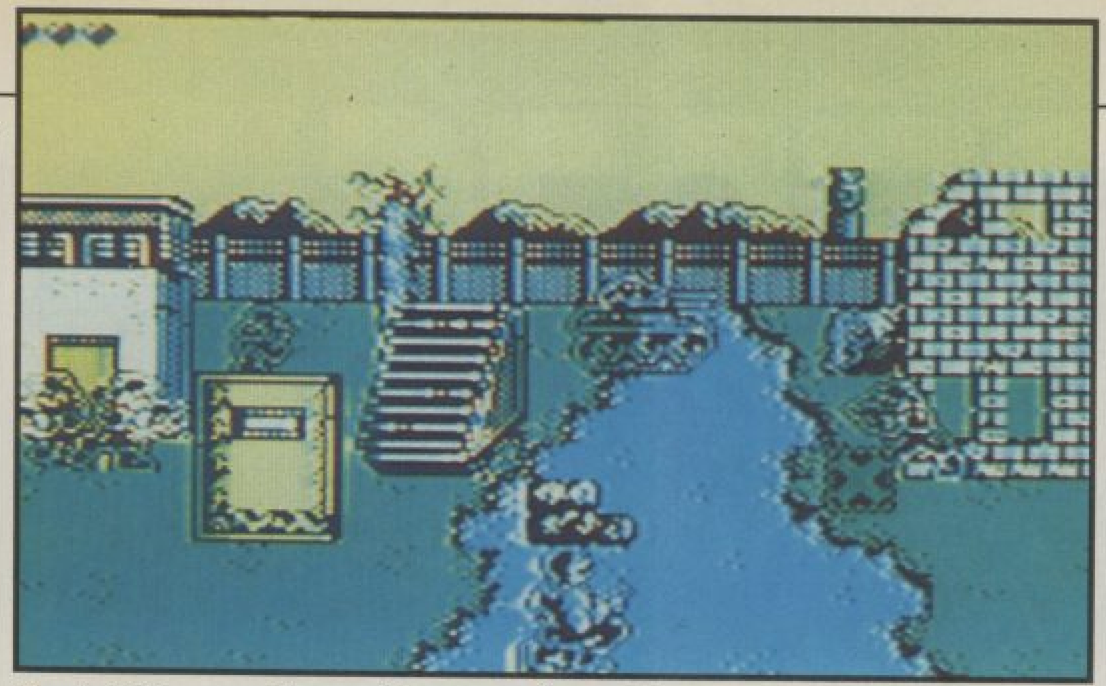
C64/128 87%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

A colourful and well drawn loading picture leads to an unremarkable but pacey, dramatic title tune. Backgrounds are a bit of a disappointment, bright but lacking definition, though sprites compensate. Enemy soldiers are small, characterful and animated with humorous exaggerated steps. The main sprite is cartoon-like, striking some good dynamic poses and animated well as he turns from side to side to spray bullets all over the screen. Tanks look tough and solid but are thankfully easily eliminated with grenades that move well through the air. Spot effects are few and ordinary but adequate for the mindless but highly enjoyable action they accompany.

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST (£19.99), Amiga (£24.99) and Amstrad (C64 prices) all expected around November 6.



Rentokill never have this sort of trouble

XENOPHOBE

MicroStyle

Those of you who eat a dictionary for brekky will no doubt be aware that Xenophobe means 'One who has a deathly fear of anything alien',. Alien nasties have been sneaking up on us humans for years, watching us and planning their attack.

Now we have decided to destroy the bug-eyed horde and end the menace for ever. The aliens have been tracked to a series of deserted space stations and moon bases.

Three teams of crack exterminators are on the job, code-named Blue, Yellow and Red squads, they travel the cosmos and act as trouble shooters... ie anyone starts trouble, they shoot them. It's decided to send two members of the team in to test the aliens' strength, so you — with or without a friend — must choose a character and go live up to your name.

At the first base the alien weirdos are everywhere. Initially armed with a phaser, better weapons can be picked up further into the maze of corridors and rooms... but although some weapons are more powerful than others, they aren't necessarily as reliable. The aliens come in a variety of guises, but don't spend too long shooting them because time is of the essence; the bases contain self-destruct devices which fry the aliens if you fail to kill them all. Your bacon is saved if the base does go , but Earth government won't be pleased and dock ypu a hefty points penalty.

The action is fast and frantic all the way, because the aliens are vicious little swine who stop at nothing to destroy you. And as they generally outnumber you at least ten to one, Xenophobe soon becomes a test of bravery and fast trigger fingers.

MC

C64 74%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Chunky C64 sprites yomp manfully around similar backdrops and shoot. The blockiness gives a less elegant feel than other versions, but otherwise gameplay is up to the same standard.



£9.99cass, £14.99 disk

The normal bright, colourful but blocky Amstrad sprites abound, fortunately not getting in the way of the exciting gameplay which is certainly as frenetic as in other versions.



£24.99

With a pounding soundtrack and impressive intro screen, you should expect something graphically stunning from the Amiga, but although the sprites are colourful and the backgrounds scroll smoothly, the machine is capable of better. Still the gameplay is affected very little by the graphical details.

SPECTRUM 80%

£9.99 cass £14.99 disk

The sprites are monochromatic, but the characters stomp around with greater determination than in the Amiga game (although the aliens kill you with equal zeal). Graphical and (on the128K) sonic detail are pretty impressive.



VERSION UPDATES

AMIGA

APB

TENGEN/DOMARK ■ £19.99
Atari ST 84%, Spectrum 86% — TGM023, C64 85% TGM — 024

Not a lot more can be said about Officer Bob and his continual search for law and order, except that the Amiga game is at last here and looking just as good as the previous versions. The only slight difference is in the improvement of sonics over the ST, but this is only to be expected.

Machine update 86%



AMSTRAD CPC

Dynamite Dux

ACTIVISION £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
Atari ST 83% — TGM023, Amiga 83% — TGM024

A neat cartoon sequence introduces the game nicely but title music is lacking. The screen size is reduced in-game but this enables smooth, swift scrolling in all directions. Graphics are colourful and detailed, the humorous sprites being of great quality, and animation is fine. Sound is limited to occasional simple effects, but doesn't damage the excellent playability of this accurate conversion.

Machine update 84%

ATARI ST

Shinobi

VIRGIN n £19.99
Amiga 50%, Spectrum 54%, Amstrad CPC 60% — TGM024

Unfortunately similar to the Amiga version. Bland colours and simply drawn, crudely animated sprites are directly taken from the 16-bit Commodore, but now with jerky scrolling. Very few samples, simple effects and warbling music round off the game, er, unpleasantly.

Machine update 48%

Go ahead, cyberpunk

INTERPHASE: EDGE OF DREAMTIME

The Games machine
STAR PLAYER

Imageworks

In the 21st century the limitations of physical reality frustrate the thronging masses, giant video screens, pulsing music, video games, intoxicating substances and violent sports simply not being enough. The solution was found in the DreamTracks, sophisticated devices linked with the brain to enable pre-recorded dreams to be experienced by the user. With so many fantastic, exciting things to do in a highly realistic environment yet completely safe, understandably, it soon became the latest and biggest entertainment craze of the 21st century.

Something was bound to go wrong, somehow, somewhere, some*one*.The Dreamers whose thought patterns were recorded for replay by DreamTracks machines began accepting bribes in return for inserting subliminal messages into the Tracks. At first simply to make consumers buy certain products, more recent illegal messages have influenced political views on a large scale. Thought control is only a small step away.

One ex-Dreamer, Chadd, has decided to help stop this corruption, aiming to destroy a particularly dangerous Track. He's asked his girlfriend to enter a High Security building (what a nice chap) while he infiltrates the security computer to deactivate all the defence systems.

The computer's programs are represented not by numbers but complex 3-D graphic icons. The windows, icons and pointers of user-friendly computers have been replaced by fast moving 3-D landscapes. The databanks of various systems are now represented by abstract shapes rather than names on a pull-down menu. Dock with one and you can access the data. And while you search through the interphase, security systems in the shape of attack fighters zoom after you.

The game starts with you entering the building through a tunnel-like datastream, avoiding the energy-sapping walls and mini-datastream bars. You emerge in black space. Above and below you are coloured squares which you fly through to other levels. Various weird graphics dot the landscape, while attack ships blast away. Press the spacebar and you can use the mouse to click on one of the options on the control panel.

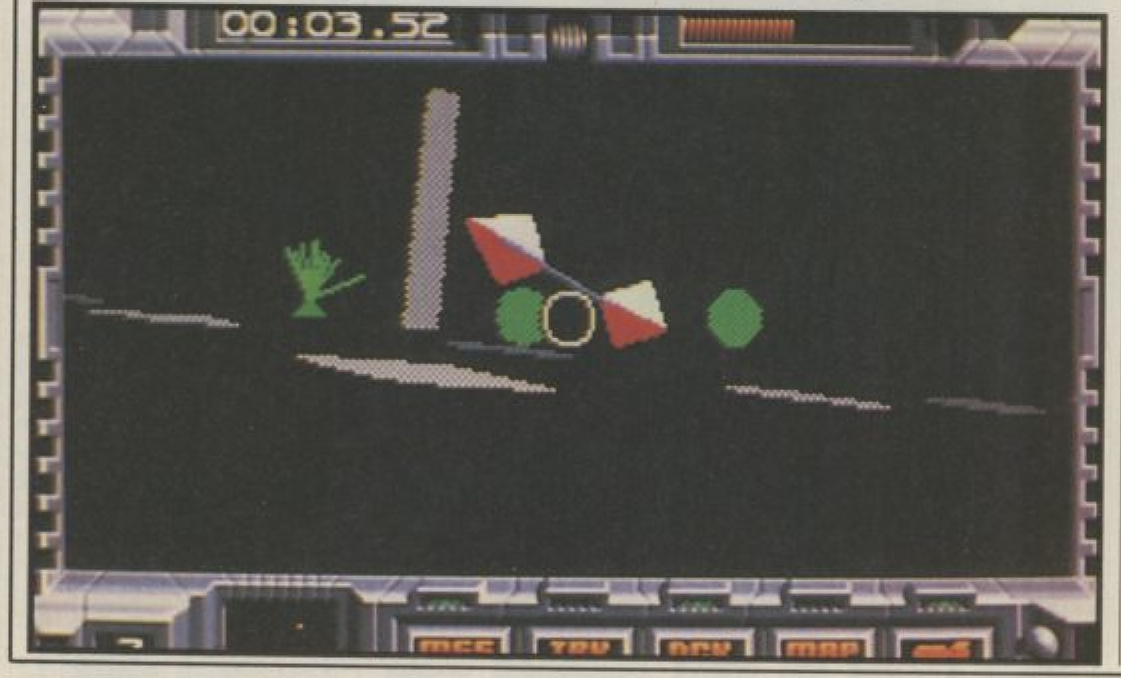
Your girlfriend sends messages to tell you if she's in trouble. To start off with she's blocked by a door. A blueprint map of her current floor can be called up, zoomed in on and scrolled around to find the door, then lock-on your navigation system. Exit from the map and flashing arrows indicate which way to go, eventually leading to a green cube in a grey frame. This is the subprogram controlling the door. Shoot it and the door opens. Your girlfriend walks through, is spotted by a TV camera and promptly killed by a security robot — perhaps switching off the surveillance systems would've been a good idea!

If you should need to lock the opened door, you can go to a workshop to pick up a green cube. Use a tractor beam on it, replace it in the grey frame, and the camera is reactivated. Other security systems to work out include turntables (which change the direction the robots go), pressure pads, electrified floors and lifts. To complete a level you must get the girl to the lift, then fly through the datastream tunnel to the next stage, at which point you can save the game.

Interphase is a strange, almost surreal game influenced by *Tron*, the Max Headroom movie, cyberpunk (the particular strain of science fiction favoured by ex-TGM star Stuart Wynne) and, with its fast, filled 3-D, *StarGlider 2*.

Gameplay itself is a combination of hectic shoot-'em-up and head-stratching adventure/puzzle game. Initially it all seems completely bewildering, but persistence soon reveals the basic simplicity of the game structure. Level one can then be solved quite easily, but then level two is much more of a challenge, the game ideas interlocking form a more complex puzzle overall. Switching off cameras, rotating turntables etc, requires a lot of tricky navigating and blasting of pesky security craft — traditional shoot-'em-up skills and a sharp mind are both vital.

Interphase has excellent puzzles, blasting and graphics wrapped up in one intriguing package, one that 16-bit owners would do well to take a look at. **SW/WL**



£24.99 — AMIGA 90%

Looks, moves and plays very similarly to the ST, sound being slightly better. Impressive graphics and involving gameplay make it equally as good a product and just as good value.

£24.99 — ATARI ST 90%

Interphase presents you with a most unusual environment: each level consists of black space with coloured squares arranged in rows on the 'floor' and 'ceiling' to form a vertically restricted void. These squares move smoothly and quickly as you fly around and generate a suitably artificial, computer atmosphere that is almost claustrophobic. The various components you see are imaginatively designed and well animated, as are the marauding computer defence craft (watch out for the toad on a unicycle on level two!). Blueprints are authentic looking but the sonics are limited to spot FX and a short Fine Young Cannibals on the title screen.

OTHER FORMATS
PC (£24.99) to follow shortly.

HOT FROM THE STATES!

You will undoubtedly spot that the four reviews on this page and Battle Squadron on the next look a little different from usual. TGM always strives to get important games reviewed as fast as possible, so when product is being developed over in America we get our man on the spot, Marshal M Rosenthal to do the biz. here's what he has to say about four major TV licences and an exciting shoot-'em-up.



THE FLINTSTONES

PC
85%

MicroIllusions

Poor Fred. Everybody is always telling him what to do; his wife Wilma, the boss, even his best pal Barney. Every time he tries to have a bit of fun just for himself — someone interferes. *The Flintsones* (which was the first cartoon show to appear on prime-time in the States) may now be a computer game — but things haven't changed for Fred a bit. He's still getting into trouble.

The game is eminently suitable for Fred, set in a world dug out from a prehistoric dig laced with the Sixties. He and the other cartoon figures are big — occupying over a third of the screen, with all the little gestures and mannerisms expected, done in a bright and colouful manner. Movements are natural due to a hierarchial system which maintains all the 'parts' making up each figure (this also enables the same parts to be used for all the characters with minimal memory and CPU hang-ups). Favourite is still Barney Rubble. Based loosely on Norton of the Honeymooners (as Fred is on Ralph/Jackie Gleason), Barney is as affable as ever. He always goes along with Fred's wishes, but that causes problems often as not. Barney may seem complacent, but he's dangerous. As you and Fred will find out.

Everything appears encased in a anti-querisitic (opposite of futuristic) stone-age television cabinet. You can even change the channels. So what do you do to play Fred? Very little besides point and click with the mouse. You 'indicate' where you want him to go — over to the refrigerator for a snack, perhaps out to the car to take a drive. What happens next follows its own wishes. Just don't expect peace and quiet; trying to get the bowling rock — er ball, and escape having to visit Wilma's mother will tax you as no shoot-'em-up ever could.

This non-traditional approach captures the essence of the big guy with the tie — meaning that no matter how hard you try, he still gets into trouble. Which for us, poor Fred notwithstanding, is a lot of fun.

OTHER FORMATS
Also to be released for Amiga and Atari ST.

JOHNNY QUEST

MicroIllusions

Take an action-based cartoon show centring around a young boy named *Johnny Quest*, add his friend and campanion Hadji, Johnny's dog Bandit, Dr Benton, and all around good guy Race — and you've got the makings of any kid's fantasy of going off on an adventure. Sure the animation was extremely limited, the stories silly, but it was fun because all the elements worked together (look at Star Trek: The Next Generation, it's almost a live version of *Johnny Quest*). With such a wealth of material to work with, how could this computer version fail?

PC
85%



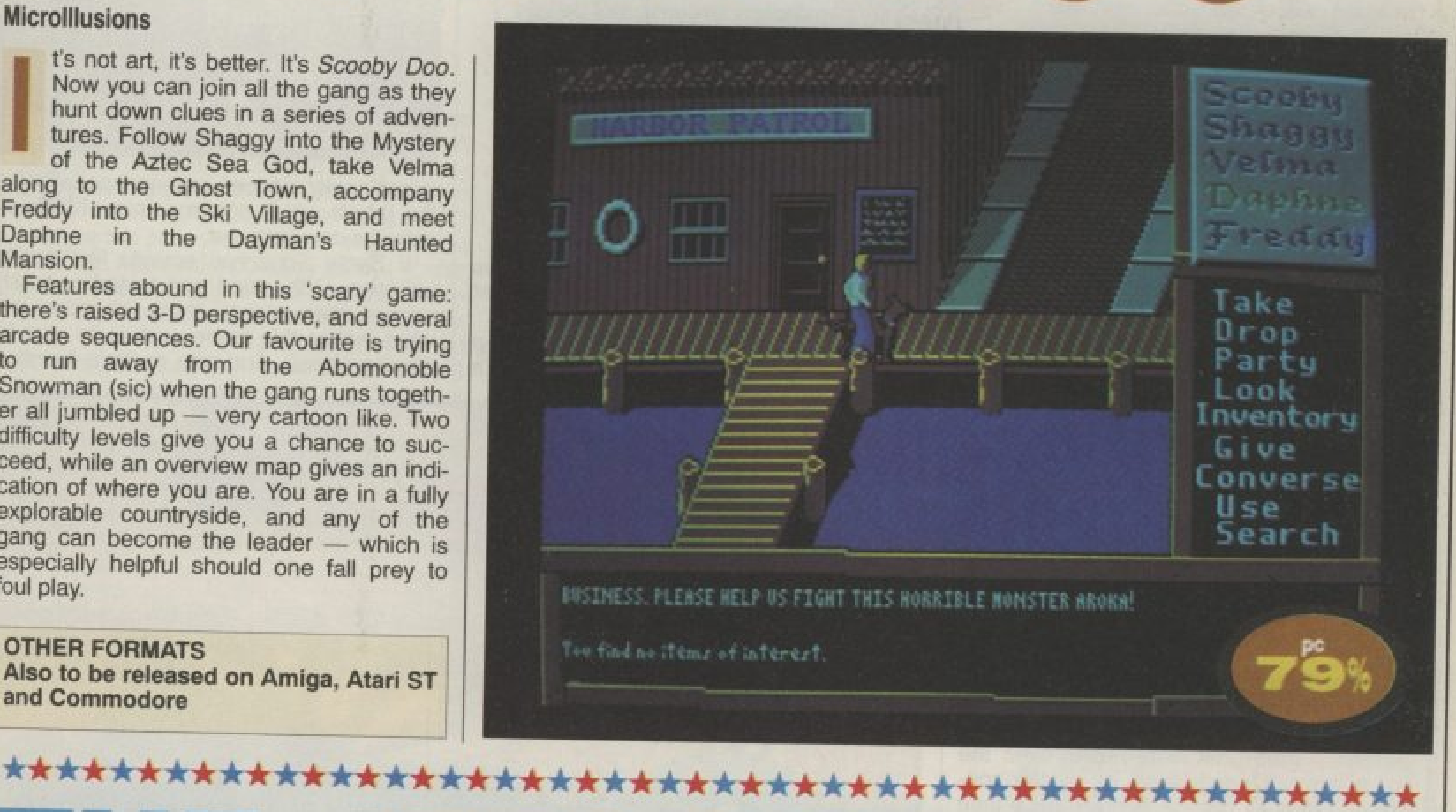
Especially as it combines the best of a number of gaming genres. Adventure fans can poke around with the mouse trying to find out what's going on in the mysterious lands discovered. Action/arcade lovers get their turn to bat because trouble is always brewing: fight scenes, hidden passage ways, locked doors to break down. The more you know about playing *Johnny Quest*. the less of a mystery — but you can bet that you'll need your puzzle-solving cap. Helping Johnny is Hadji, with his magic that sometimes works (very rarely in the right way as we recall). Bandit is always there to lend a paw _ and when all else fails, tune into that wrist TV communicator.

Most of the action takes place on the single large window. Directly below is a section which allows the choosing of words and deeds. Characters vary in size, with sections of the game consisting of very large graphics. What's more important is that animation (using 3-D raised perspective) moves at a quick pace, and provisions are made to incorporate the rashness of our young hero in the gameplay. Several of the scenes have been digitised from the original cartoon, and text display is combined with icon controls.

The theme is adventure. Humour is not easily found here, although Hadji and Bandit are definitely placed for comic relief. At its best, *Johnny Quest* will bring out that day dreamer within that still longs to swing through the jungle, cruise through outer space, and defeat all that is Evil

OTHER FORMATS
Also to be released for Amiga and Atari ST.

SCOOBY DOO



Microlllusions

It's not art, it's better. It's *Scooby Doo*. Now you can join all the gang as they hunt down clues in a series of adventures. Follow Shaggy into the Mystery of the Aztec Sea God, take Velma along to the Ghost Town, accompany Freddy into the Ski Village, and meet Daphne in the Dayman's Haunted Mansion.

Features abound in this 'scary' game: there's raised 3-D perspective, and several arcade sequences. Our favourite is trying to run away from the Abomonoble Snowman (sic) when the gang runs together all jumbled up — very cartoon like. Two difficulty levels give you a chance to succeed, while an overview map gives an indication of where you are. You are in a fully explorable countryside, and any of the gang can become the leader — which is especially helpful should one fall prey to foul play.

OTHER FORMATS
Also to be released on Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore

THE JETSONS

Microlllusions

You can stop waiting for the future — it came over 20 years ago in the shape of a very hip cartoon show. *The Jetsons* defined most of what we call the late Sixties — hair styles, way of talking, and electronic gadgets galore. That it was set heavily in a time period some thousands of years in the future didn't mean much. Humankind may have been heading for the stars, but all that was desired here could be contained in a laser-powered can opener.

Enough of philosophy; now consider this problem: you're George Jetson — respectable member of the community, family man (his son Elroy, etc), with the proper boy/girl kids ratio and Jane, the beloved wife who drives you up the wall. Plus a rewarding and satisfying job at the Sprockets factory doing who-knows-what for that creep of a boss Spacely. Oh, and Astro the dog too of course.

The game has one basic purpose: survive. Which is more subtle here than most — it's not just avoiding aliens from space or deadly rocket blasts — it means trying to keep your job so as to support and nourish your family. It also means putting up with the boss, and trying not to disintegrate into a tightly packed stress ball. George is not cut out of hero cloth.

Set in a graphic-adventure format, there are windows to view in order to face the world. The biggest window indicates where you are, with objects to inspect and take. Point and click techniques enable you to see 'inside' things, and also to move around. A draggable inventory area keeps track of what's been found, and text interaction includes an option for 'choosing a path.'

This may all seem somewhat sedate, but it ain't easy being a man in the future folks! And we ain't gonna give any more of this one away either.

OTHER FORMATS
Also to be released for PC and Atari ST

PRESS ANY KEY

Against stacked odds

BATTLE SQUADRON

Innerprise Software/Electronic Zoo

Sometimes a review can be easy. No question what to call *Battle Squadron*: it's a shoot-'em-up. You fly back and forth the length of the screen as vertically scrolling landscapes of a mechanized planet pass by; landscapes which hatch enemies at a conastant rate in an attempt to wipe you out.

The program under review is a 'beta version', which means that the 'off the shelf' disk could prove a bit different. But this is the only way to get the facts to you quickly on a game which features some of the best high-speed animation yet seen on the Amiga.

The story line is simple. You (and a compainion ship if desired) are wiping out the hostile forces bedeviling the planet Terrania. Your craft can move over the entire screen length, and is joystick-controlled. Once all has been quieted it's time to head into the Inner Core to finish the job. There's even a sign indicating where the entrance is located. Of course there are a few problems to take care of before you can enter.

Heading the list is an abundance of alien craft which appear from offscreen singly, or in pairs, or as a group. Below, self-propelled devices launch from underground silos which protect their contents from repeated blasts. Add to this a few ground tanks operating on a railway system, plus mobile cannon, and it's easy to see that things are not pleasant over Terrania.

Fortunately your powerful nose-mounted laser pulverizes most things in the way, but occasionally special tokens appear within the rubble which confer points, shields and mount extra weapons.



If *Battle Squadron* sounds like another variation of the tried and tested spaceship versus alien planet, that's because it is; what makes this game work is its ultra-fast playing speed. And with multiple frames of animation for each onscreen sequence, it gives a believable feeling of really blowing up baddies and wiping out ground installations. An option screen will be included to allow for various controls, and you don't have to worry about shooting your teammate, because both ships are impervious to their own weapons.





The first game to be seen on the shores of Britain from Innerprise, Battle Squadron, is imported by ex-MicroProse chief, Stuart Bell, through his new company, Electronic Zoo. Turn to the World of Commodore Show report on page 49 for more info on the new American company

It's the rapid-fire animation, coupled with effective sound and a long running music track containing the right amount of droning bass which puts this shoot-'em-up head and shoulders above so many others. *Battle Squadron* isn't a new idea, but in the genre of visually bright and addictive shoot-'em-ups, it certainly deserves to be right up there at the top of the heap.



Bark at the moon

ALTERED BEAST

Activision/Sega

This is another home computer arcade licence which we've already reviewed as a console conversion — on the Sega Mega Drive, as part of issue 19's Japanese special. To recount the plot, the daughter of a god-like man has been kidnapped by an evil sorcerer and the corpses of two ex-heroes have been re-animated in order to rescue her. They have to battle rightward through the sorcerer's monstrous horde of followers to eventually find and rescue the distressed damsel.

First punching and kicking zombies and demons in a graveyard, the task at hand is made considerably easier by collecting energy pods left behind by a flashing albino lascert wolf. The first two collected increase muscle power, while on the third a startling metamorphosis occurs: the player becomes a werewolf, with a mighty blow and fire-shield for slaughtering bad guys.

Carefully directed power is essential for the end of each of the five levels, where the sorcerer uses magic to transform himself into a huge nightmare beast.

The dedication and painstaking attention to detail of Japanese programmers pays great rewards in their games, particularly arcade conversions. Playing the British computer translations says something about the differences between the two countries. Some graphics of the versions reviewed here have obviously been sweated over, but the majority don't make use of the respective machines' resolution and colour capabilities. Playability also suffers, and it's not just down to the lack of a joypad's two independent buttons; assailants advance in too great a number and are sometimes as awkward to kill as the power pods are to collect.

For fans of the coin-op this is still a good enough conversion to warrant purchase. Most others will prefer to look elsewhere.

WL

C64/128 64%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Blockiness is largely unavoidable but care and tactful use of colour makes for pleasant, smooth-scrolling backgrounds. The sprites are a different matter. Some creatures are even more disfigured than they're meant to be, badly coloured and their animation — fairly basic in the original — is made simpler and slower.Theme music is okay, but sparse spot effects are noisy. It's often awkward to change between punch and kick moves and there's no continue-play option so all the joystick strain doesn't seem worth it.



£24.99

Though not quite as restricted, Amiga graphics are almost as small as the ST's; the smooth scrolling cinematic-style display is an improvement, however. Though better sounds are used, music doesn't work as well and effects get lost amid it.



£19.99

Backgrounds are grainy and lack colour and detail as they scroll jerkily by, but sprites are neat, even if some are drab and animation merely adequate. Gameplay has pace, helped by energetic music and dynamic samples, but much confusion arises from the player sprites — they are identical to one another.

OTHER FORMATS
Spectrum and Amstrad (C64 prices) as TGM reaches the shelves.



VERSION UPDATES

AMIGA

Dragonscape

WICKED SOFTWARE £19.95
Atari ST 59% — TGM018

One man and his dragon are out to save the world, but who will save us from them? The ST version received a less than enthusiastic welcome, on the Amiga we are afraid to say that it's still as dull. Backgrounds are nicely drawn, but control of the dragon is on the difficult side, so more time is spent spanging off of the scenery than killing baddies.

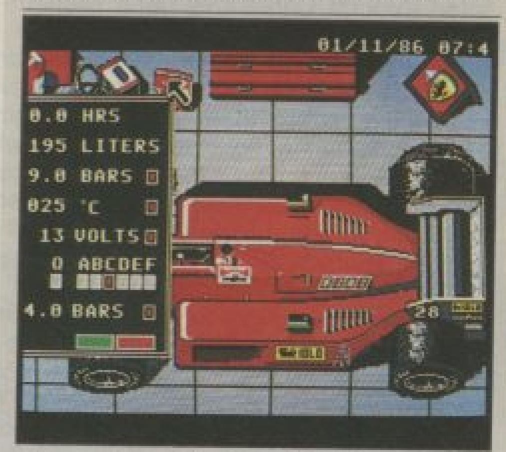
Machine update 51%

PC

Ferrari Formula One

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.95
Amiga 93% — TGM005

It's quite a while since we've seen this game in the TGM officewhich is a disadvantage for this version — the games industry has advanced considerably during the past 18 months whereas as this is still a fairly standard Revs clone.



There are a selection of tracks and variable Ferrari performances but keeping the car on the track is the real part of the game, and as a psuedo-simulation that isn't easy.

The introductory/selection screens are nicely drawn but ingame the cars are simplistic and the tracks are equally as bland with empty tracksides and indistinct horizon features. The graphical jumps between frames are quite large and update is a bit slow, and occasional effects (the engine is silent) are standard PC ear-stabbers.

Nevertheless! Completing a race let alone winning one is a considerable challenge and much fun can be had mastering the controls of the vehicle. Car and racing enthusiasts will get most from this as it's quite expensive considering what it offers.

Machine update 75%

AMIGA

Slayer

HEWSON £19.99
Atari ST 41% — TGM024

Regrettably similar to the Atari ST version. The playing area is wider than the ST's but otherwise graphics are the same — colourful, metallic and high-tech. Music has better sounds but effects are poor (standard laser sounds, messy explosions). A little easier than the ST but still a very difficult game, Slayer has few (if any) rewards.

Machine update 42%

PRESS ANY KEY

The Games machine STAR PLAYER

A rescue in Wolf's clothing

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

Ocean

You have succeeded in producing the Number One computer game for Christmas 1988. Now go on to do the same in '89...

Arab geurillas have hijacked a commercial transport DC-20 scheduled for Boston, USA. They demanded the immediate release of 23 imprisoned comrades — or in ten hours they would kill all hostages.The aircraft was lost somewhere over Calvia, Africa, where it disappeared from radar.

The President of the United States negotiated through Calvia's General Kadam — who strenuosly denied any knowledge of either hijackers or hostages. He forbade the President to send US forces into Calvia and would regard them as invaders and declare war. In a tight situation and with time running out, it was the Chief Secretary who provided the answer: they would send Roy Adams, commando of Operation Wolf, to fight anonymously through Calvia and free the hostages.

And yes, it's up to you to be the guiding hands of Roy's gunsight but this time a friend can help you as his ex-Vietnam colleague, Hardy, in this operation — *Operation Thunderbolt*! Though it's generally the same bullet-spraying action it differs from Wolf in that in some of the eight levels you're travelling into the screen, a perspective view similar to a racing game — minus the curves and high speed. The familiar slow rightward scroll also makes its mark with a vengeance.

This is the case in level (Mission) one, where you're marching up a road toward a church, where a spy is hiding. As in the original game, the playing area above the status panels is effectively your body (and that of your friend, if appropriate) so that a missile shot 'out' of the screen — be it bullet, Apache rocket, dagger or grenade — reduces your life energy.

The gunsight has the freedom of the screen and is mostly used to gun down soldiers, of which there are more than enough, and there are three end-of-level bosses among them. It's also used to free hostages and to pick up useful items dropped by eliminated enemies. These include First Aid kits, power drinks, body armour , magazines and rockets to boost your ammunition supply. Rockets are used sparingly, generally upon helicopters but also jeeps, boats and buildings.

Operation Thunderbolt is basically Wolf but on a bigger, better scale. In some levels you're shooting from a boat or jeep and although your viewpoint is only altered by the addition of barely noticeable vehicle frontage at the bottom of the playing area, it gives a much greater potential for varied enemy graphics. This, I'm sure, was the intention when Taito designed the coin-op and it pays off, adding more life (if not blood!) to the gameplay. It's helped by the forward motion used in these levels — enemies approaching from the horizon makes a pleasant change from side attacks.

Two-player games add more appeal and adds volume to games as you shout out instructions to each other in order to massacre the enemy as quickly and efficiently as possible and get the hostages rescued.

Basically Thunderbolt has the same great mindless, bloodthirsty action that made Operation Wolf so fun and addictive to play, and in fact that's its only fault. Some people may find it just too much like the original, although newcomers will be surprised at how playable it is and Wolf fans will love it.

A year on from the best-selling original, Operation Thunderbolt has gameplay elements that both bring back memories and add new excitement, not least of which is the great two-player option. Fun, playable, addictive — go for your gun with Ocean and you won't regret it.

WL



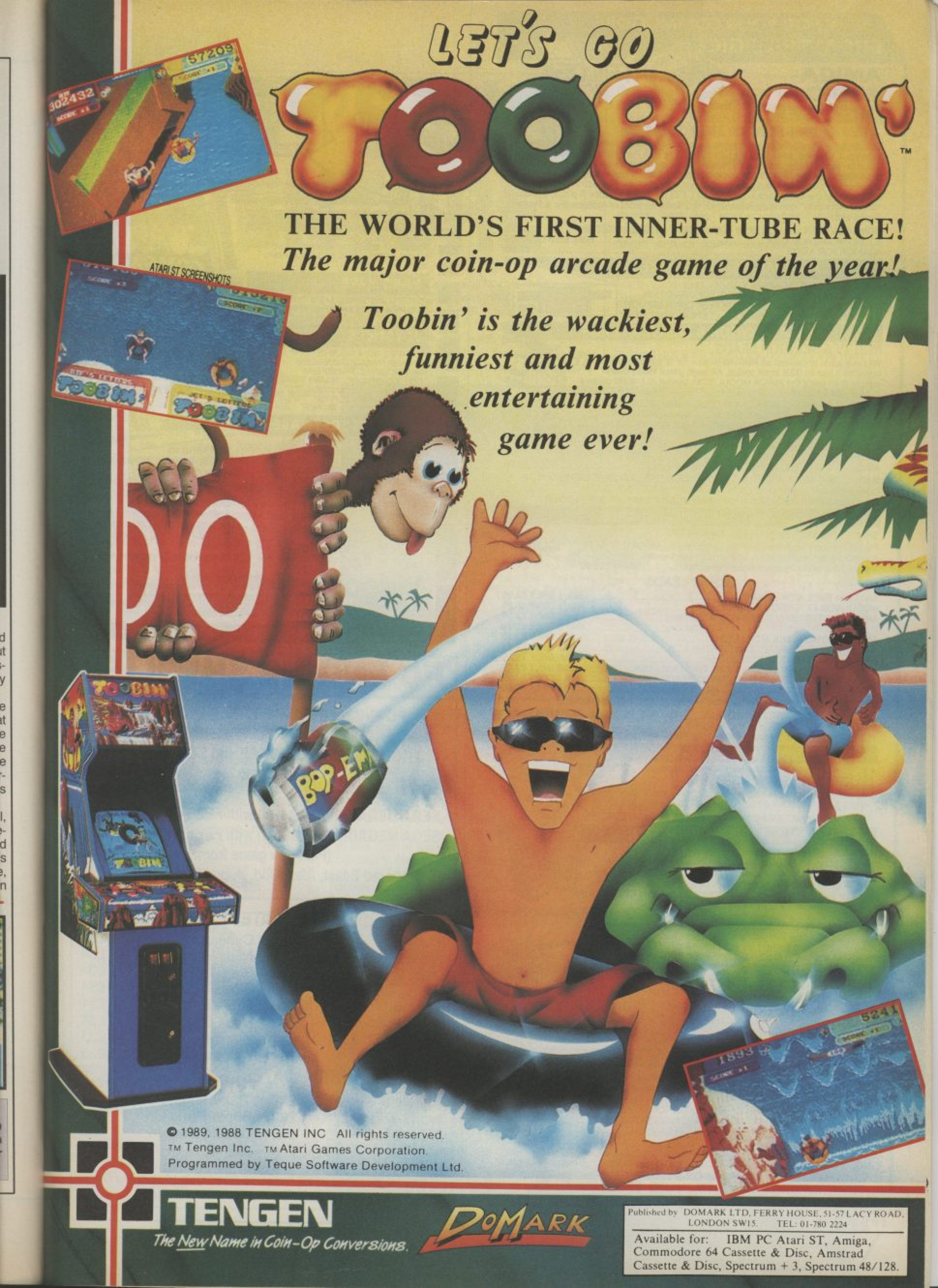
£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Other than red and blue for the status panels the game is in the same highly-detailed monochrome as Wolf although there's much greater graphic variety. Even setting the various clear backgrounds and threatening vehicles aside, there are several different types of soldier, each accurate representations of their arcade selves, especially those wearing sunglasses in level six who are nothing short of brilliant. In sideward-scrolling levels soldiers appear in great numbers — sometimes the screen becomes virtually full of them — and many grenades and knives come spinning realistically toward you, so even two people have a tough task on their hands. Scrolling suffers very little, bearing in mind the amount of objects, although the perspective levels' roadside/riverside features approach a bit jerkily and definition is less professional in them. Spot effects are reasonable but can become monotonous, but the title tune is very good — tense and militaristic, setting the scene for this excellent shoot-out game.



OTHER FORMATS

Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC (Spectrum prices), Atari ST (£19.99) and Amiga (£24.99) all for release around November 20.



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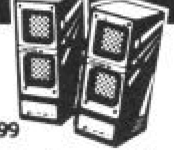
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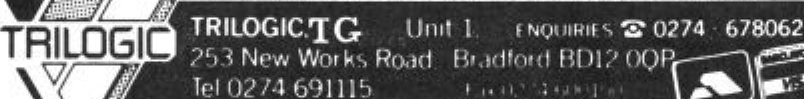
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TERRY'S BIG ADVENTURE

Shades

Terry's a little bored with life. Tired with watching Prisoner Cell Block H, eating baked beans and juggling blue jelly, he's decided to go on an adventure — a big one at that — all around the colourful, magical land in which he lives.

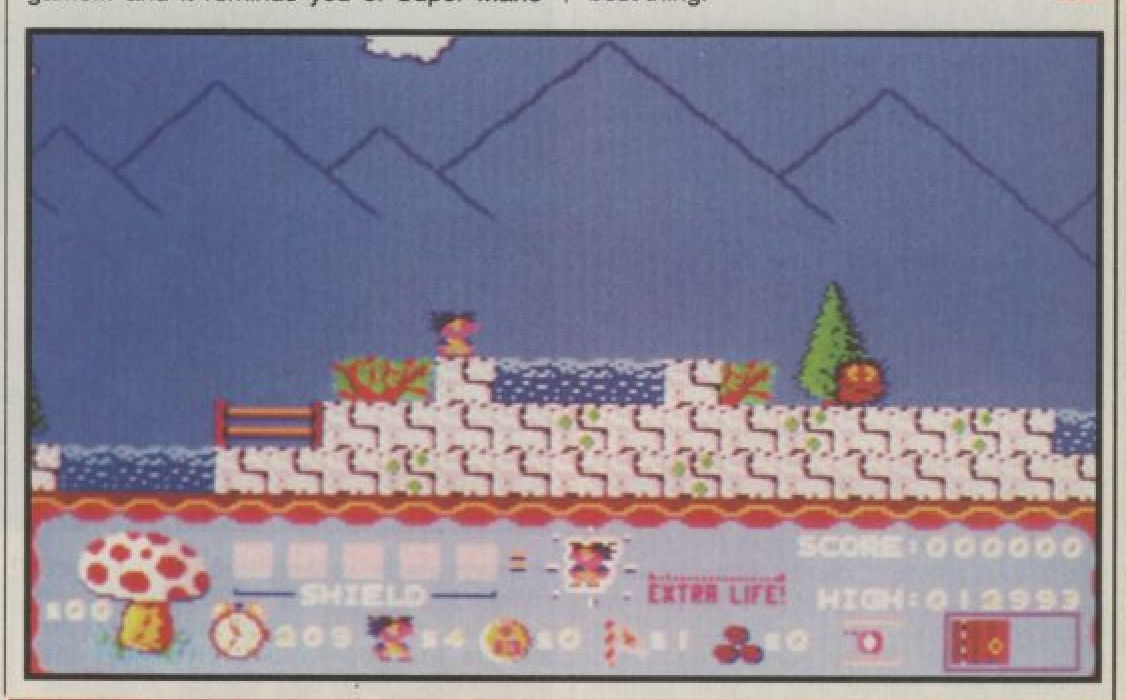
One thing that hasn't lost its appeal to Terry is his bright red yo-yo which he wields with deadly accuracy. It's just as well because he needs it to fend off the variety of lethal little creatures that he encounters on his travels. He can't always knock them off willy-nilly, however, as hitting something with the yo-yo causes him to be knocked backwards — perhaps into water or a green mushroom. These are normally avoided with a graceful jump, but Terry always has to be careful because he suffers from inertia which can cause him to slide along the ground.

Other than simply seeing the sights, Terry's aim is to collect special mushrooms he finds (for future leisure purposes — they make him dance around and giggle a lot) but he can also pick up keys to access certain parts of levels, flags to multiply his score and stones to throw as an alternative weapon. Some creatures leave behind letters when disposed off. Collecting those which spell out T-E-R-R-Y give him limited invulnerability and spelling E-X-T-R-A gains him another life to play with.

At first glance, the small graphics remind you of Super Mario Bros, then you play the game... and it reminds you of Super Mario Bros, albeit with features of its own. A yo-yo isn't exactly a common game element — Frak! is the only other game we can think of using such. It's an unusual weapon in that enemies have to be close for it to be effective and because of this it can provide some worrying moments — as can the high semi-controllable leaps and inertia.

Another legacy from Bros are the hidden rooms and the bonus stages which all resemble those of the classic Nintendo game, and of course mushrooms are fungi inspired from the same source.

Nintendo refuse to licence-out Super Mario Bros and clones such as the ill-fated Great Giana Sisters haven't escaped their watchful legal eye, so it's only variants such as this that can provide similar action. It's not as fun or addictive as the original, but if you haven't got a Nintendo it's currently the next best thing. **WL**



C64/128 74%

£6.99 cass,
£9.99 disk

Though still short, Commodore sprites are nearer standard size than the ST's but still keep the Super Mario flavour. They're drawn and animated well but, though smooth scrolling, backgrounds are blocky and have few colours. Music is better than the ST's but still irritating, and there is no sound effects option. Not quite as good value as the ST but still a good buy.



£14.99

The sprites are really remarkably small but still contain reasonable detail in their compact design and are animated simply yet amusingly and effectively. Backgrounds are colourful and neatly drawn, scrolling smoothly, but the background music is awful; luckily a few little effects can be selected. Great value at 15 quid.

OTHER FORMATS

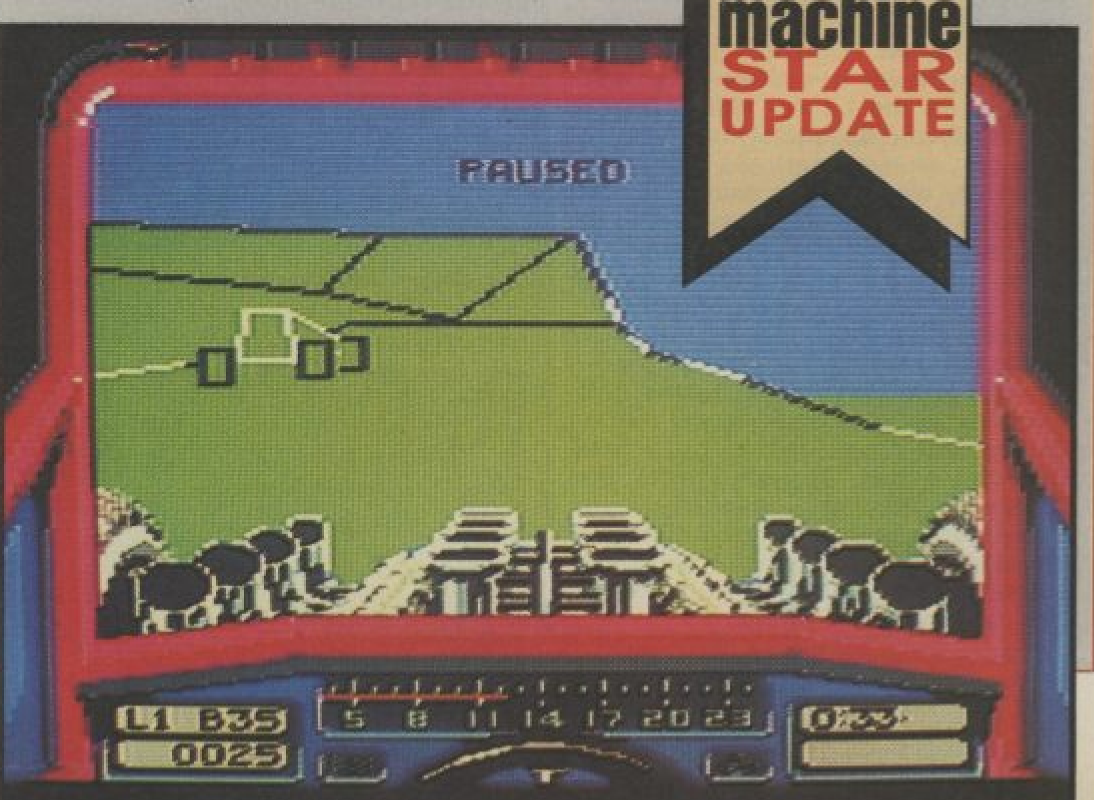
Improved sound and full-screen scrolling on the imminent Amiga version, priced £14.99.

Stuntcar Racer

MicroStyle £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
Atari ST 93% — TGM024

The fast and frenetic action that scared the hell out of us in the ST version is still present in the first of the 8-Bit games. On the C64 obviously the graphical touches that livened up the ST game are missing (the mug shots of the racers etc), but on the track the sheer pulse pounding playability is still there. The ST version was awarded a much deserved Star Player accolade and so the equally impressive Commodore game is definitely Star Update material.

Machine Update 91%



The Games machine
STAR PLAYER

Drifting the night away

POWER DRIFT

Activision



In the history of computer and video games (sounds like a good name for a magazine... no, on second thoughts perhaps not...) there have been a seemingly endless number of racing games with a wide variety of vehicles in which to speed around some form of track. Buggies, speedboats, motorcycles and, most commonly, various sports and Formula racing cars. In recent years the evermore realistic bends, twists, turns and slopes have been supplmented by stomach-churning hydraulic chairs.

Sega's <B>Power Drift provides the wildest ride so far with fast, violent hydraulics to complement fast, twisting courses, the result being one of the most (if not THE most) exciting racing games of all time. What's more, they gave us a new type of vehicle to play with — a low-slung 4x4 hot-rod that puts you *very* close to the ground. And now we're lucky enough for Activision to give us the conversion... bar the hydraulics, that is...

Power Drift is nice enough to let you select the course you wish to tackle and there are five different circuits to each of those five courses. Twelve drivers compete in each race and you're free to choose any one of their amusing, cartoon-like portraits.

An extensive panel at the top of the screen gives your score, time, course letter (A to E), stage and lap number, gear, and speed in kph. Above that is your current position and the head and shoulders of each driver — their expressions and movements change depending on their fortunes or misfortunes.

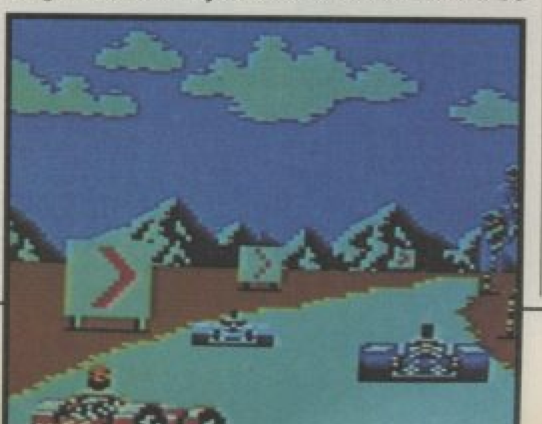
Normal racing control convention applies, fire switching between the two gears, although you're unlikely to have used your joystick to steer around such wandering circuits before! Pillars, signs and palm trees are the roadside features to circuits that have some very tight bends and roller-coaster hills, and on some versions (ie 16-bit!) there are circuits that cross over themselves, figure-of-eight style, either at ground level or overhead, the road supported by props.

On each circuit, the aim is simple: finish in the top three. If successful, you go on to the next circuit of the course, hopefully to complete them all, then to the next course of five — but it sure ain't easy!

However, that isn't much of a problem because it sure *is* FUN! That's also an accurate (if brief) description of the coin-op's gameplay, which means Activision have captured the essence of *Power Drift* and produced a successful conversion.

Like any good racing game the urge to weave between the opposition and hit the front spot is high but actually doing it is something completely different, particularly bearing in mind the tight corners and bumps that make *Power Drift* such an energetic game. Scraping in at third is usually satisfying enough so that the next circuit can be tackled — and with 25 tracks in total it'll be a long time before you've tried them all. It'll be longer still before you complete them all in one game and claim the Power Drift trophy — so just make sure you don't waste any time getting hold of a copy!

WL



C64/128 92%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Bearing in mind the C64's resolution and slothful processor, Chris Butler (Space Harrier, Ghosts 'N' Goblins, Thunder Blade) has done very well. Though on the blocky side, courses are clearly and adequately represented and the drivers' portraits are commendably close to the coin-op's. The 4x4 cars are the definition highlight, instantly recognisable as the raunchy vehicles of the coin-op and combining well with the fast 3-D perspective courses. Roadside features approach jerkily but the track itself works fine — it's just a shame the hills lack side graphics as otherwise they're rather impressive. Good music goes well with the action, though effects are sparse. Playing similarly to Commodore Buggy Boy but with fast, plentiful 3-D graphics somehow crammed into a single load, Power Drift is worth every penny.

AMIGA 90%

£24.99

Highly polished presentation close to that of the coin-op — like the game as a whole, the course/driver selection screen is bright and colourful with cartoon-like portraits. Before each race begins, a view of the landscape pans around to rest on the track then speech accompanies the starting lights, a 'start' sign fluttering upwards as the race gets underway. Road graphics are very nicely shaded but on corners jagged edges show on the roadside edges, due to the cells used to compose them. Still, at the speed everything moves this is no problem, and in fact it's too close to the coin-op in that the track often curves right off the screen; without the hydraulic tilting it detracts a little from the gameplay. Car sprites are very cleanly defined and match the overall professionalism of the conversion. Funky title music leads to lively effects samples — screeching tires, growling engine and very clear speech.

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST (£19.99), Spectrum and Amstrad CPC (both C64 prices).

May the force be with you

KNIGHT FORCE

Titus

Three basic (if not clichéd) sword and sorcery game elements: one, a beautiful princess, to be kidnapped; two, an evil sorcerer, to do the kidnapping; and three, a valiant swordsman,to do the rescuing. In this action-biased arcade adventure they're named Tanya, Red-Sabbath and Fair-Storm — in that order, I hope — but there's more to this tale than most.

The kingdom of Belloth was once ruled by Helias, a noble man appointed guardian of the gates of time and space by the gods themselves. As such a significant place Belloth was sure to come under threat, but it wasn't until Helias died and his time travelling powers passed on to his faithful knight, Fair-Storm, that it came. Red-Sabbath has developed strong magical powers and has cloned himself, spreading his selves through time, but still cannot rule the Kingdom. Thus he has kidnapped Tanya to lead Fair-Storm into a trap so that he may steal the key to space/timegates.

To destroy Red-Sabbath Fair-Storm has to find the magic amulets of power, so as to eliminate Sabbath clones (Heavy Metal bands all sound the same anyway). Before the game proper starts you select the time zone from a row of five dolmens (Neolithic stone tombs). You're then magically transported to a horizontally scrolling land, ranging in time from the stoneage to the spaceways of the future, and occupied by assailants ranging from cavemen to robots. Attacking sword moves wear down their energy but if you don't use crouch and jump moves properly it's your energy which is wasted — and you only have one life to play with.

Red-Sabbath's clones are devious fellows and transport Tanya to another time zone when you find her, so all five levels must be completed in order to save her. This takes a lot of travelling since any amulet is generally not the correct one for the level in which you found it, meaning that the level's clone cannot be destroyed. If that's the case then a magical bird has to be slain to return to the five dolmens.

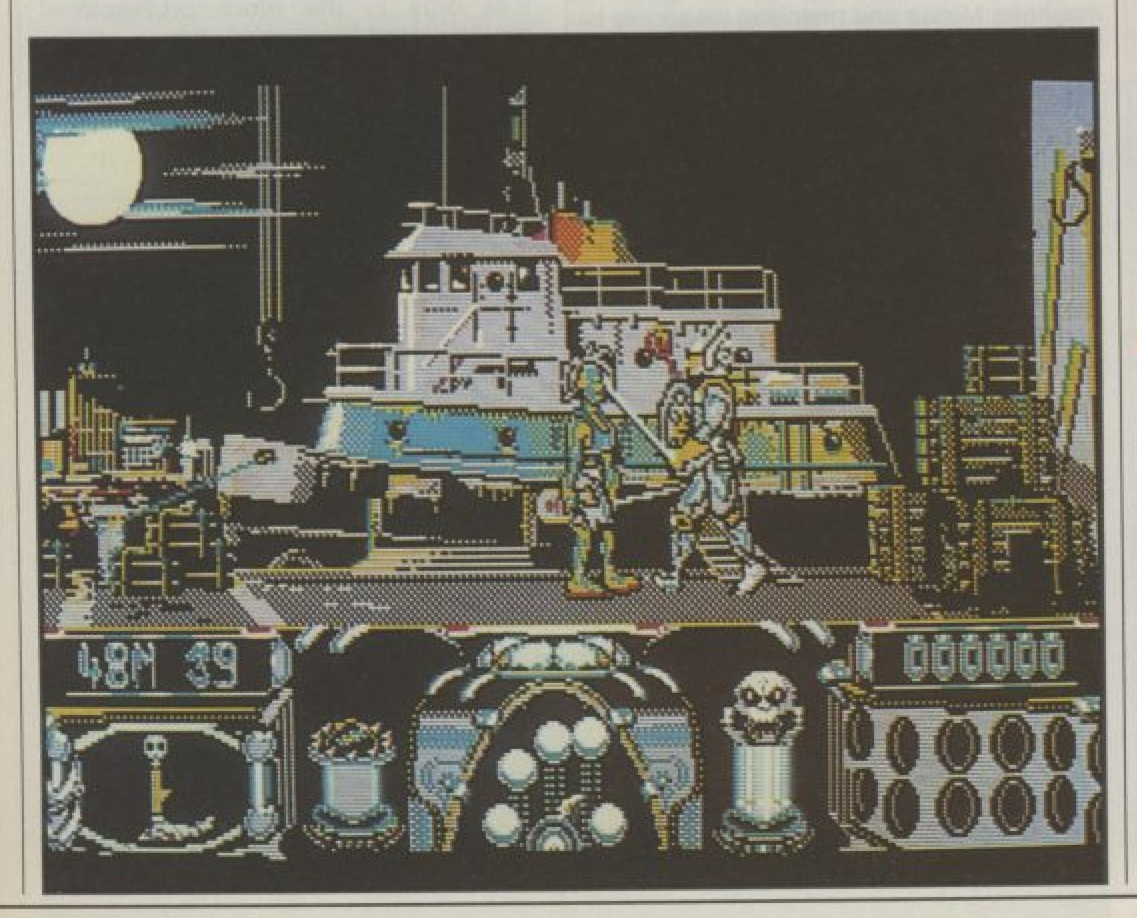
Knight Force is reminiscent of Psygnosis's Barbarian — a sword-slashing hero marching left and right facing monsters and traps — except that control is direct rather than with pointer and icons. Gameplay is rather simplistic, just dodging and a few sword moves, but it's this that makes Knight Force fun and easy to get into. Time zone selection also helps in this way so that any level of the game can be accessed at leisure and the same sections don't have to fought through time and time again in order to see more of the game.

Untaxing for the brain but a good test of dexterity, KnightForce is a playable arcade game to pleasantly pass a few hours. **WL**

£24.99 — **PC 77%**

All major graphics cards supported, the spinning Titus logo preceeding the colourful title screen bodes well for the game.The knight sprite is very nicely drawn and is animated realistically, and other sprites have character and humour, although they're not so elegantly designed. Sound effects are quite good for the PC, but above all it's one of the rare quality action games to appear for the machine.

OTHER FORMATS
Amiga and ST (both £24.99) should be out now, with Spectrum(£8.99) and Amstrad (£9.99 cass, £14.99) close behind.



VERSION UPDATES

NINTENDO
Ikari Warriors

SNK/Nintendo ■ £29.95
Spectrum 84%, Commodore 64 87% — TGM006, Atari ST 81%, PC 53% — TGM007

Long, long after the home computer versions, Nintendo Ikari Warriors is too little too late. The main sprites are podgy and have deformed, pointed limbs, move with two-frame animation (they look like Mr Ben as they run) and shoot massive tennis ball bullets, bigger than in any of the other versions. Enemy soldiers are only marginally better defined and the heroes' tanks are small and simple — and fluorescent pink! Backgrounds are pleasant enough but are repetitive and scroll a touch jerkily. The soundtrack is okay for the Nintendo but the jaunty military tune soon irritates. Ikari Warriors is an old game and its concept is very tired these days, a fact that isn't helped by this conversion's ugly graphics. If this is one of your favourite coin-ops or you're desperate for another Nintendo game, go ahead, but for the vast majority it's much too expensive for what little it offers.

Machine update 57%

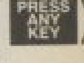
ATARI ST
Dragon Spirit

TENGEN/DOMARK ■ £19.99 Spectrum 70%, Amstrad CPC 63% — TGM024

This is your typical square-jawed hero saves simpering princess from evil baddie type affair that on the ST is colourful but a real pain to play. The amount of bullets slung out by the baddies gives you little chance of survival (unless you are an extremely good dodger). Scrolling is also poor, especially when you move from one side of the screen to the other.

Machine update 65%







Canine carnage

DOGS OF WAR

Elite Systems

No, Elite haven't picked up the licence for the Frederick Forsyth novel, nor the 1980 movie. Instead it's more of a Schwarzenegger or Stallone jog-along massacre in the style of Commando and Ikari Warriors, two of Elite's coin-op conversions; and programmed by Steve Bak who did those two, it's been specifically designed to take advantage of16-bits.

The complexity this readily allows is immediately apparent: a map of the world has 12 highlighted countries, the locations for the game's missions. The missions can be tackled in any order and each has an associated briefing paragraph and reward for completion. They vary between missions involving kidnapping, assassination and stolen valuables, but all have one thing in common: dozens of gun-toting men, whether soldiers, gangsters or terrorists, out to spill your blood.

To give them a taste of their own bad medicine there's an extensive armoury. The amount of money you have to spend here varies on the mission and whether a one- or two-player game has been selected, but there is at least 10,000 credits in the bank. There's plenty to spend it on, too: 14 types of gun (including Uzi, Kalashnikov and M60), three missile launchers, a flame thrower, all the necessary ammunition... and a cuddly toy.

Missions are mostly a simple, though certainly not easy, matter of gunning down the enemy sprites while avoiding their fire, and using the keyboard to change between weapons. There are automatic cannon and flame throwers, jeeps and trucks to complicate matters, and horizontally scrolling sections to interupt the traditional vertical ones.

Dogs Of War is Commando on a grand scale — lack of player vehicles and water-wading detract from an Ikari Warriors feel — and the bloodshed and body count are greater still. Your sprite's blood and body are sure to be among them, though,because this is one tough game. Bullets and grenades fly in all directions, and dodging them is challenge enough — actually shooting the bad guys is very much a secondary consideration.

Though graphics vary between them, missions all play quite similarly and have the same zig-zag map, but difficulty varies andi ntro text adds a little meaning to the mayhem. Mixing and matching weaponry is fun in itself — comparing different firearms' capabilities and the ammo they use, while keeping an eye on the cost — and some items are best suited to particular mission sections.

Only hardened gamesplayers will be able to get further than halfway through most missions; single players will run out of patience not long after running out of lives. A two-player game makes things easier and more enjoyable, introducing elements of teamwork strategem. The best dual player shoot-and-run gameyou can buy.

WL

£19.99 — ATARI ST **83%**

In an amusing title sequence a commando appears, blinks, sneers, then grits his teeth to spray off a few dozen rounds from his gun. Pleasant drawings of the world and weaponry lead to the neat, compact graphics of the game's backgrounds. Though they're often repetitive and features such as houses look very flat, they're also colourful and scroll smoothly. The two main sprites are well defined and animated and die in a grisly manner, spinning around before disappering in a fountain of blood. Other soldiers look okay but leg animation is weak — sticks moving up and down — and vehicles lack depth. Music is marginally above average and sound effects are dynamic gunfire and mournful cries.

£19.99 — AMIGA **83%**

Very similar if not identical to the ST in most respects. Other than some slight shading and palette differences, graphics are the same and sound differs only in the more professional sounds used for music.

Stormlord

Hewson ■ Amiga £19.99
Spectrum 86% — TGM018, Amstrad CPC 84% — TGM019, Commodore 64 85% — TGM020

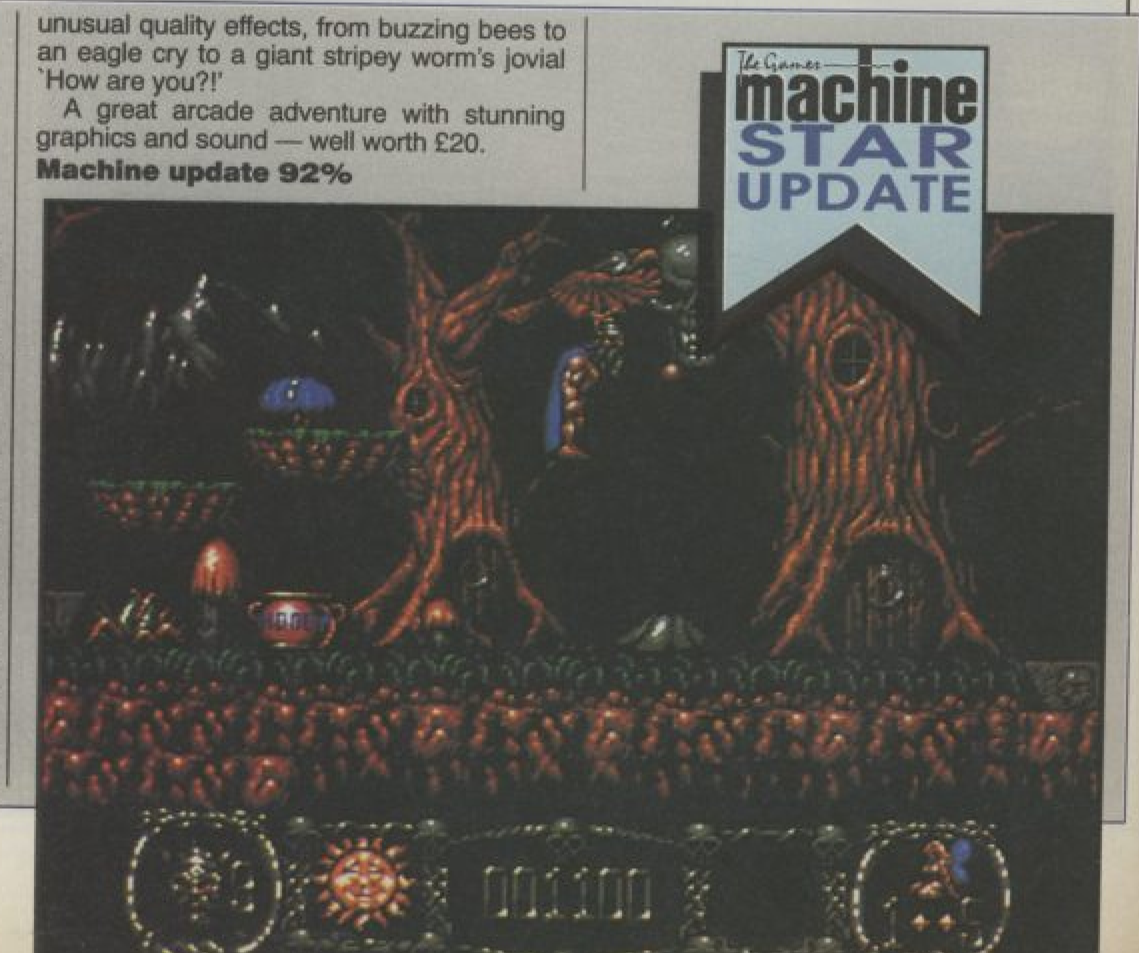
The Realm is in trouble. The faeries, guardians of the land, have been kidnapped by Badh, a wizened queen who wants to draw the life force from The Realm; it will die if the Stormlord doesn't rescue the faeries in time. He has a supply of swords and thunderbolts to destroy any of Badh's creatures, but also must use objects such as keys, umbrellas and honey pots in order to complete each level. He's aided by Mael Ovin, an eagle summoned from special stones who carries Stormy quickly from A to B.

An excellent title screen sets the very high standard of the graphics. Colour and shading is used brilliantly throughout to provide arcade-quality visuals, Stormlord himself being particularly impressive — though I'm sure the busty naked faeries will find favour! Sonics are equally as professional, with a choice between a moody, dramatic tune or unusual quality effects, from buzzing bees to an eagle cry to a giant stripey worm's jovial `How are you?!'

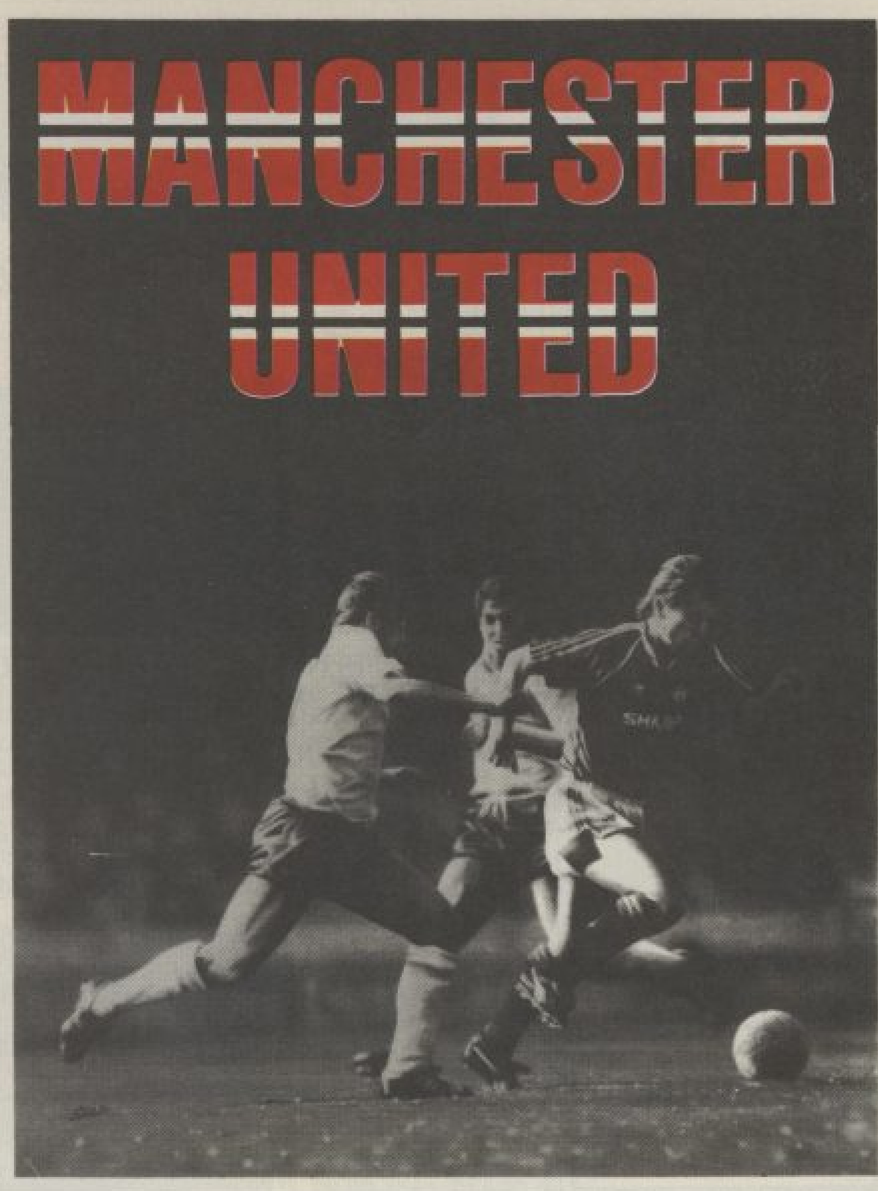
A great arcade adventure with stunning graphics and sound — well worth £20.

Machine update 92%

The Games machine STAR UPDATE



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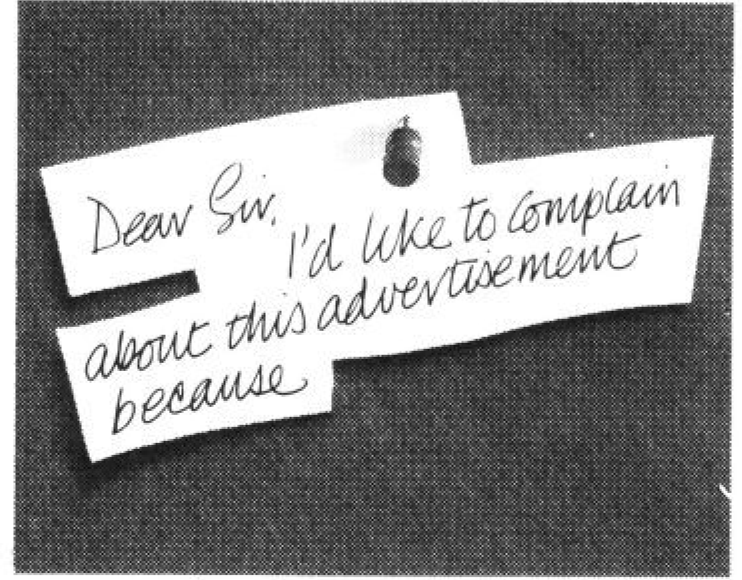
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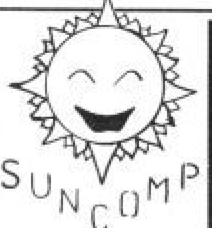
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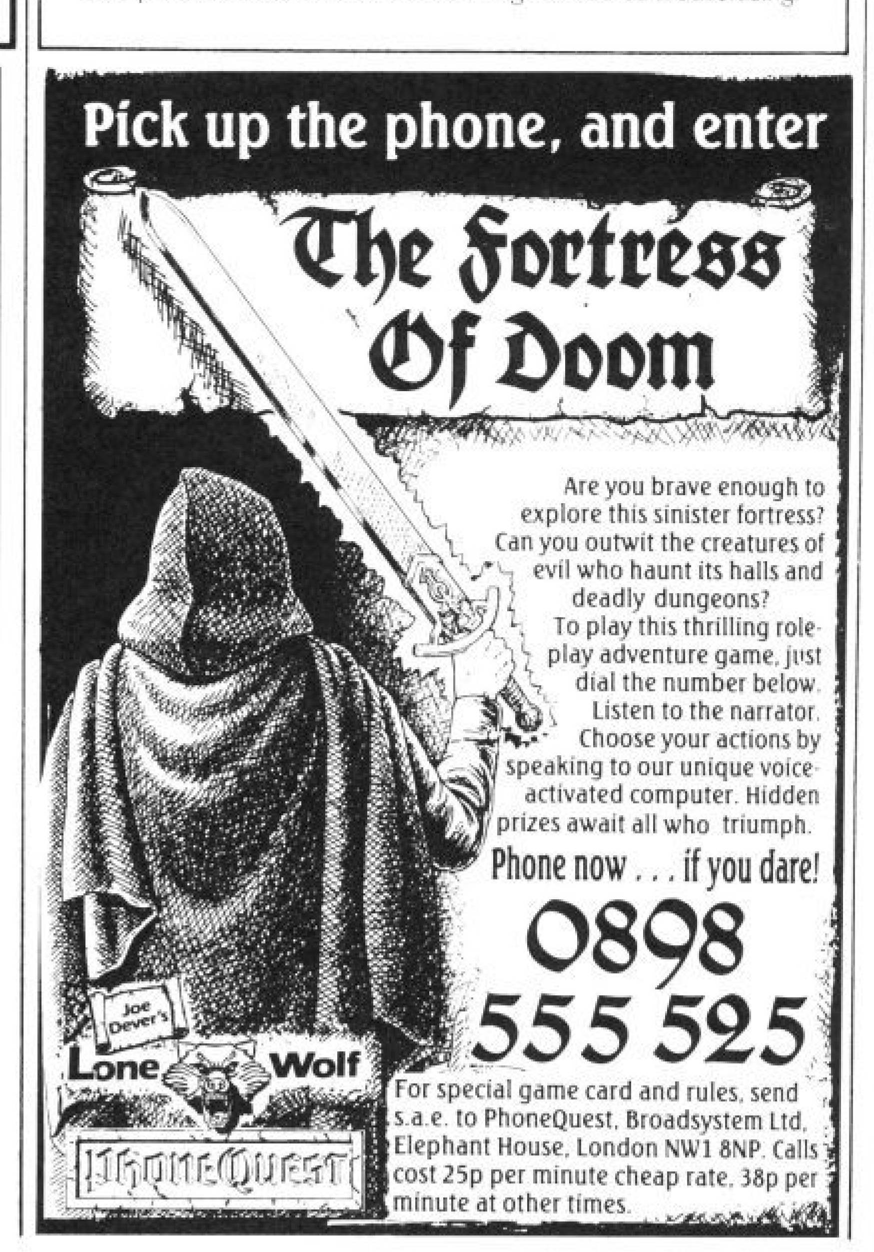
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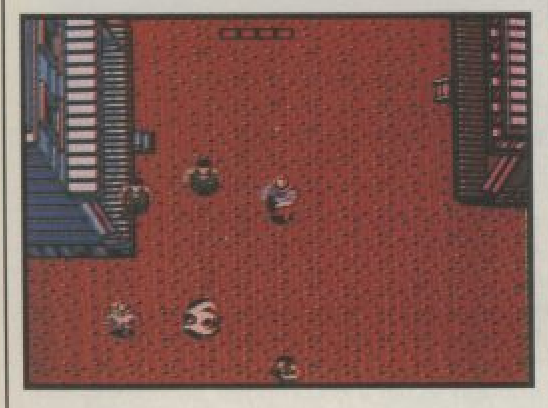


SOFTWARE SNAX

TROJAN

Capcom ■ Nintendo £24.95

Sorry, no: this game has nothing to do with a giant hollow horse or the fluctuating fortunes of Troy. Instead, Trojan is the hero of this horizontally scrolling jaunt and he's one of the endless number of martial arts masters who are so popular in console games. This one's a kendo freak and needs all his sword-brandishing skills to put an end to the oppressive rule of a king, a nasty piece of work who is threatening to take over the whole world (not including Wigan,



of course).

Trojan's sword can be swiped at any of three heights, depending on whether he's standing, crouching or jumping, and he also has a He-Man shield to fend off opponents. He' needs perfect timing with both if he is to last long against the king's army, composed of many and varied beings. Barbarians, musclemen, Trojan clone, the Hatchet Brothers (Percival and Henry), piranhas, slashers... this sprite's in ter-ouble! Handily, there are a selection of picks-ups, endowing such abilities as super jumps, increased speed and high-power sword.

It's just a shame this game isn't endowed with any originality or addictive qualities. Though limited in colour and detail, backgrounds are adequate, scrolling smoothly, and there's some neat definition among the generally unremarkable sprites. Music grates and effects are weak little noises.

Difficulty is set way too high: mace-brandishing soldiers approach in such frequency that progress through a level is very slow, then a knife thrower forces you to change your offense/defence, usually too late to prevent energy loss. Other sprites are at least equally nasty and after a few games it becomes so frustrating that throwing the Nintendo and/or TV around the room becomes a temptation.

Other than a few unusual sprites Trojan is one big cliché. Gameplay is both highly predictable and highly aggravating — not worth the effort. **WL**

Machine rating 48%

ACTION FIGHTER

Firebird ■ Atari ST £24.99, Commodore 64 £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

Firebird are at pains not to specify who you're up against in this multi-vehicle blaster — it's just 'the enemy'. There are five vertically scrolling levels and you begin on a motorcycle. Obstacles, the roadside and other vehicles have to be avoided, but the latter can be shot with a built-in gun. This weaponry is updated to double-fire, missiles, rear-fire and limited invulnerability by entering any Sega vans that approach.

Depending on vehicles destroyed, lettered parts are released which enhance the cycle's capabilities. When four have been collected it can be transformed into a car, then two more parts allow it to fly. In the air the objective is to bomb ememy bases and aircraft, and a Sega twin-rotor 'copter gives better weaponry.

Bonus points are gained by collecting occasional flags; collecting all 20 for a level gives an extra large bonus.

A very obviousSpy Hunter variant, Action Fighter's graphics are as old-fashioned as its gameplay. Though smooth and swift scrolling, the ST has simple backgrounds, using few colours and sprites which are little better, with simple sound effects and title



music.

It's a similar story on the C64, though some ugly colour schemes are used and the 8-bit graphics are fairly blocky, sprites generally being almost square in design. Scrolling's good but sound is crude for the Commodore, and gameplay is a little easier than the ST's.

Action Fighter is fun and instantly playable but its outmoded gameplay and poor graphics mean that it doesn't hold your attention for long. Certainly there's enough to enertain for an hour or two but that just isn't enough to warrant the price tag — at budget it would be fine. Only ardent Spy Hunter fans need apply. **WL**

Machine rating: Atari ST 56%
Commodore 64 54%

FAST LANE

Artronics ■ Atari ST £19.99

You've had many chances to become an F-1 champion, but Fast Lane gives you the opportunity to become top of the C-1 league.You are offered a set of options — including a practice mode — with manual or auto transmission. It's best to start in auto mode because you don't have to mess about with changing gear and can concentrate on steering the car.

To race you first have to qualify for a place on the grid by simply recording a decent lap time in the time span allowed (if you are happy with your current position pressing escape aborts the lap).

Tight harepin bends proliferate, so along with your psychopathic fellow racers screaming round corners and minding roadside obstacles is the order of the day. Smashing into any, or other cars, causes damage which can be sorted out with the odd pit stop.

At the end of each race you are informed of your position in the drivers' league table before tackling the next track.

All seems fine on the option screens (especially impressive is the pits scene showing the car with the back panel removed for repairs), but when you get to the actual race things go rapidly downhill. Graphically the opposing cars look as if they have had large weights dropped onto them, they are so squat (plus they appear from out of nowhere). With so many racing games around for Christmas it's important to stand out from the crowd, and this one doesn't. **MC**

Machine rating 35%

GUN SMOKE

Capcom ■ Nintendo £24.95

'This town ain't big enough for the 478 of us!' Okay, so ith asn't got quite the same ring to it but it's fitting for li'l' ole Hicksville during the gold rush. In 1849, to be precise, when it was taken over by a mean and large group of bandits called the Wingates. They robbed the bank,raided the houses, groped the women, drank all the whiskey and ate all the black Fruit Pastilles — generally making a nuisanceof themselves.

Time for a hero, methinks, complete with spotless white stetson and jangly spurs: Billy Bob (wasn't he in The Waltons?). It's his stalking footsteps that are guided through six vertically scrolling levels, armed with a pair of six-shooters capable of firing many more than six bullets before reload-



PRESS ANY KEY

ing.Though ammunition for them is limited, Billy can collect other weapons and switch between them at any time: machine-gun, Magnumor Napalm bomb(!) — all of which didn't exist in the Wild West, but then Billy's a very resourceful guy. He's also a nifty horse rider, but as his steed has the curious habit of hiding in water barrels, he rarely has the chance to prove it!

Ordinary bandits and 'injuns' are the usual cannon (or pistol) fodder but at the end of each level one of the Windgates' ringleaders shows up for a show down.

The aging coin-op is reproduced nicely. Though repetitive and lacking real detail (as in the original), the smooth-scrolling backgrounds have a pleasing look, bringing the Wild Westc olourfully to the TV screen. Sprites could have had more detail, but they're still representative of Western characters and are animated nicely. Title music is dramatic and ingame a silly but fun tune bounces along.

A pseudo sequel to Commando, Gun.Smoke is a graphical change, but most importantly introduces pick-ups and extra weapons to the simple gameplay. It isn't easy, though, and initially this isn't helped by the control system: button one fires to the left, button two to the right, and both have to be held down to fires traight ahead. When adjusted to this proves a versatile and stimulating system and helps the sometimes annoying difficulty of the shoot-and-run gameplay.

A good conversion with high playability and challenging if similar levels. Worth cashing in a few nuggets for **WL**

Machine rating 73%

INTERDICTOR

Clares ■ Archimedes £34.95

Touched on in last month's Archimedes games feature, Intedictor provides an out-of-the-cockpit view from a jet fighter on a mission to destroy an invading force from a river valley.

Armed with 30mm cannon, air-to-ground rockets and heat-seeking air missiles, you pilot the plane 500km north to bomb the enemy headquarters, avoiding — or better still — destroying ack-ack guns, trucks, barges, surface-to-air missiles and aircraft. In addition to bog-standard flight sim read-outs and displays there's a variable range radar, armament and map screens, and a Heads-Up Display, all to aid your task.

Interdictor's landscape is sparse, to say the least. Stray away from the river and all you'll see is a plain blue sky and a plainer yellow-brown ground; not exactly thrilling. Bridges, hills (well, pointed bumps then), roads and the river give you something nice to look at: though not packed with polygons they're sharply defined and are smoothly, swiftly animated, and the enemy vehicles combine well with the realistic tilting movements of the horizon.

First impressions are deceptive. A glance at the manual reveals an acute lack of pages in comparison with the weighty MicroProse tomes, but this and the related depth of the game isn't where Interdictor's strength lies. Whereas there isn't a massive variety of targets to destroy or flexibility to undertake different missions, Interdictor wins through with the most technically impressive sensation of flight yet seen on a micro.

You immediatly see the power of the Archie at work once you get airborne (easy enough, thankfully). With a stunning smoothness of movement, impressive screen handling and mathematically perfect object manipulation (well, 99% perfect) the game comes into its own with 32-bit speed and action to match. (Tense moments ensue when the missiles fly and shells from defending ack-ack guns skim past your attacking aircraft). Add to this some excellent sound effects (considering the Archie's less than good speaker system) and you've got a surprisingly good simulation. Forget about having depth to rival F-16 Combat Pilot or complexity to worry Falcon, Interdictor is enjoyable enough just to fly. At last, a game you can show off to inferior 16-bit owners!

WL/RH

Machine rating 80%

IRON TRACKERS

Infogrames ■ £19.99 Atari ST, Amiga

Iron Island is the venue for this violent game for one or two players loosely based around the sport of quad bike racing. Each character is defined on a photofit-style screen of eyes, noses, hair etc from which a personality is created.

Happy with your creation, it only remains to arm your bike with one of four weapons — a 12.7 mm machine gun, a bazooka, a booster and an oil gun. The object now is to get from one side of the island to the other in one piece, travelling from stage to stage following arrows on a map. By clicking on the first destination you are shown astride a powerful Quad bike, moving vertically up the screen (in two-player mode the second player's character is shown in a separate window below yours).

The going isn't that quiet however. Different sections contain different hazards and very changeable weather conditions, from equatorial grassy plains manned by blowpipe wielding natives and nasty looking rhinos to snowy Arctic wastes. At the end of a set time period you are stopped and whether you have reached the end of the section or not you are informed of your fiscal and physical states.



If you survive you go on to the next section and so on until you reach the finishing post.

Although there are some quite nice touches (the building of the face for example) Iron Trackers on both machines becomes tedious very quickly. The game is too frustrating to get into, and when you do finally get somewhere you wonder why you bothered. **MC**

Machine rating ST 49%
Amiga 51%

PICTIONARY

Domark ■ Atari ST, Amiga £24.99

First came Trivial Pursuit, then Trivial Pursuit II and now a game very similar, but where clues are conveyed to others by pictures. Based on the board game, you have the choice of one to four players, or if a party of people suddenly descend, you can play in up to four teams.

The playing board is made up from five different coloured squares representing the five subject categories the 'artist' has to draw: People, Object, Action, Difficult and All Player. In one-player mode the computer becomes the artist, but in team mode one person can volunteer for the task with their team mates guessing.

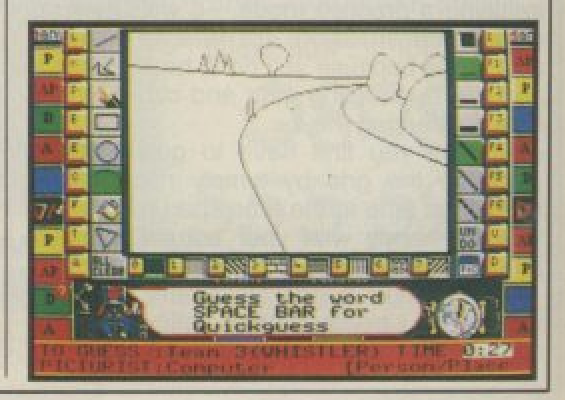
Whichever mode, you start by clicking the cursor on the box of cards icon in the top-right of the screen. The computer picks a question card corresponding to the square you are currently on.

You're then taken to the art package part of the game, where either the computer or human player draws a picture using the options available (and there are a fair few). A set time limit is allowed for those guessing to speak the answer to the question, the space bar is then tapped to see whether they were right or wrong. Honesty is demanded of players, because it's easy enough to tell the computer something less than the truth if you'r on your own.

In two-player or team modes, for a correct answer a die is thrown and your counter is moved around the board — and another round begins. Answer wrongly, and control of the board goes to the next player/team. This continues until one of the counters reaches the finish line,.

Despite the good graphics package, Pictionary boils down to a game that must be played by at least two people because it's no fun at all against the computer. It is nicely presented, and you certainly don't need to be a great artist to use the art package which has obviously has a lot of thought behind it, in fact it's simplicity itself to draw with it. Both 16-bit versions are virtually identical, but we had mixed opinions on this game, so follow the time-honoured cliché and try before you buy. **MC**

Machine rating: Atari ST 80%
Amiga 80%



The Games machine

NEXT ~~MONTH~~ year!

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1990

1989

Imagination Workshop

That underworked and overpaid Yank, Marshal M Rosenthal, gets cracking on the next exciting installment of IW. Next issue's seven-page extra features the latest news and reviews on the Atari Lynx hand-held; revelations from Lucasfilm, and their new Pipe Dreams video game; hundreds of competition prizes; PLUS two previews of games never before seen in the UK. What's it all about? Find out in the next star-spangled issue.

The Wonderful World of Disney

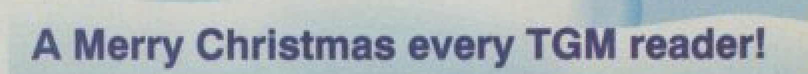
There's more going on at Disneyworld than you'd imagine. It's not just a collection of overpaid actors in undersized Mickey Mouse suits. Everyone knows that Disney are creating a new high-tech world in a small corner of Florida — you probably think you've read all there is to know — but no-one's going to tell you what we have to reveal in the next wonderful world of TGM...

Sampled delights

It's an old headline but we couldn't resist it for that's exactly what the next issue will have — all about the delightful and exciting world of sampling. For just £150 and an ST or Amiga you too could produce digitised samples of sounds that would make Batman look positively tongue-tied. Capture all your favourite words from audio and video, or pick out instruments from your favourite chart hits, both to use in your own BASIC programs or include in tunes created on professional sound packages. It's all in the next all-singing, all-dancing (almost) issue.

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